

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND ALHURRA TELEVISION

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

NOVEMBER 10, 2005

Serial No. 109-113

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.house.gov/international_relations

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

24-515PDF

WASHINGTON : 2006

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2250 Mail: Stop SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HENRY J. HYDE, Illinois, *Chairman*

JAMES A. LEACH, Iowa	TOM LANTOS, California
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey, <i>Vice Chairman</i>	HOWARD L. BERMAN, California
DAN BURTON, Indiana	GARY L. ACKERMAN, New York
ELTON GALLEGLY, California	ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, American Samoa
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida	DONALD M. PAYNE, New Jersey
DANA ROHRABACHER, California	ROBERT MENENDEZ, New Jersey
EDWARD R. ROYCE, California	SHERROD BROWN, Ohio
PETER T. KING, New York	BRAD SHERMAN, California
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio	ROBERT WEXLER, Florida
THOMAS G. TANCREDI, Colorado	ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
RON PAUL, Texas	WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts
DARRELL ISSA, California	GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
JEFF FLAKE, Arizona	BARBARA LEE, California
JO ANN DAVIS, Virginia	JOSEPH CROWLEY, New York
MARK GREEN, Wisconsin	EARL BLUMENAUER, Oregon
JERRY WELLER, Illinois	SHELLEY BERKLEY, Nevada
MIKE PENCE, Indiana	GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, California
THADDEUS G. McCOTTER, Michigan	ADAM B. SCHIFF, California
KATHERINE HARRIS, Florida	DIANE E. WATSON, California
JOE WILSON, South Carolina	ADAM SMITH, Washington
JOHN BOOZMAN, Arkansas	BETTY MCCOLLUM, Minnesota
J. GRESHAM BARRETT, South Carolina	BEN CHANDLER, Kentucky
CONNIE MACK, Florida	DENNIS A. CARDOZA, California
JEFF FORTENBERRY, Nebraska	
MICHAEL MCCAUL, Texas	
TED POE, Texas	

THOMAS E. MOONEY, SR., *Staff Director/General Counsel*

ROBERT R. KING, *Democratic Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

DANA ROHRABACHER, California, *Chairman*

EDWARD R. ROYCE, California	WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts
JEFF FLAKE, Arizona, <i>Vice Chairman</i>	HOWARD L. BERMAN, California
MARK GREEN, Wisconsin	EARL BLUMENAUER, Oregon
MIKE PENCE, Indiana	ADAM B. SCHIFF, California
JOE WILSON, South Carolina	

GREGG RICKMAN, *Subcommittee Staff Director*

GREGORY MCCARTHY, *Professional Staff Member*

CLIFF STAMMERMAN, *Democratic Professional Staff Member*

EMILY ANDERSON, *Staff Associate*

CONTENTS

	Page
WITNESSES	
The Honorable Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, Chairman, Broadcasting Board of Governors	8
Mr. Mouafac Harb, News Director, Alhurra Television Network	13
Mr. Andrew Kohut, Director, Pew Research Center for the People and the Press	31
Mr. James Phillips, Research Fellow, Middle Eastern Affairs, On Behalf of Ms. Helle C. Dale, Director, Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, The Heritage Foundation	38
LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING	
The Honorable Kenneth Y. Tomlinson: Prepared statement	11
Mr. Mouafac Harb: Prepared statement	15
Mr. Andrew Kohut: Prepared statement	33
Ms. Helle C. Dale: Prepared statement	40
Responses to questions submitted for the record by Members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations to the Broadcasting Board of Governors	45
APPENDIX	
Mr. Mark Rhodes, President, InterMedia: Prepared statement	59

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND ALHURRA TELEVISION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:55 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Dana Rohrabacher (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is called to order.

Today, the Subcommittee meets to review the challenges facing the United States public diplomacy efforts in the Arab world, an increasingly important component of America's foreign policy, as we learned from the witness before the Full Committee just an hour ago.

American public diplomacy is powerful in advancing freedom, strengthening nascent democracy, and building democratic institutions in the Middle East and beyond. Of course, our vision for that region are not inconsistent with America's values, but are inconsistent with some very powerful elements in that part of the world and are an anathema to anti-Western radical Islam. Good people in the Middle East who may desire democratic government, personal freedom, economic progress, and other things associated with our way of life are vulnerable to those who preach hatred of the West and who totally reject the free and humane values that we all hold dear in this country.

Our efforts at public diplomacy in the Middle East then must be dedicated toward making the region less susceptible to hatred and suspicion, and more accepting of the notions of liberty, justice and democracy. It is this commitment to a better idea, a more attractive alternative to the decent and peace-loving people of that area, that will carry the day and will write the future, whether it be a future of peace and harmony, or a future of discord, violence and oppression.

There is a market for the work of Alhurra television and there is a mission that needs to be accomplished. There is an audience who is receptive to our point of view, because democracy and human rights and religious freedom are not our possessions, but our universal values. It is both a national security strategy and a moral imperative that we as a Nation convey these principles and these values successfully.

As our colleague and Chairman of the Full Committee, Henry Hyde, has said, how is it that the country that invented Hollywood and Madison Avenue allowed such a destructive image of ourselves to become the intellectual coin of the realm overseas? This is a haunting question that should propel our efforts here today.

We need Alhurra, but we need an Alhurra that is respectful, well-run, and a positive force in a very volatile region.

While realizing the challenges America faces and not expecting instant results, we do expect a reasonable level of efficiency in what we are funding. We also expect that the Broadcasting Board of Governors has the proper number of members and not be operating with a handicap of vacant positions, leaving the board with fewer members than is required by law. The neglect reflected in long-term vacancies in the BBG is disconcerting and something that we need to know about and need to talk to the Administration about.

Of course, there are other specific concerns as well. We need to understand the logic behind Alhurra's outsourcing to Associated Press Television Network in London and to Quantum Communications in Beirut, all at a cost of several million dollars a year. Is this a subsidy of the Associated Press, which puts the product of Alhurra's journalists to use in its own operations? We also need to know if Alhurra's policy to discourage its reporters from rushing to cover breaking news is leaving the likes of Aljazeera and Al Rabea to be the primary source of time-sensitive information for people in that region.

Questions have also been raised about a Lebanese tilt to the style of reporting that may not appeal to the wider Arab audience. We need to hear about that.

Finally, what are the management standards for the network's procurement? Is single-source contracting the norm? If it is, is it an acceptable pattern and practice for the Alhurra network and its sister radio station?

The Subcommittee is interested in answers to these and other relevant questions, as well as both panels' recommendations for public diplomacy overseas.

Before introducing the witnesses, I would yield to my distinguished colleague, Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank you, Mr. Chairman. It certainly is not my intention to denigrate the importance of the subject matter of this hearing. It certainly is worthy of review and we all need to embrace an effort to reinvigorate our public diplomacy. One only has to read the polls worldwide to know that anti-Americanism is deepening and broadening everywhere, not just in the Middle East. But I would submit that since we have limited time and resources, that this Committee should have other priorities that are of considerably more consequence to the American people.

I find it particularly ironic that we have conducted five hearings and spent considerable time and monies on investigating the United Nations and its Oil-for-Food Program, but we can't seem to investigate how the Coalition Provisional Authority, which we created, staffed and funded, managed to lose track of some \$9 billion of the Iraqi people's money in less than a year, according to our own Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. I find it in-

credible that he has not been called before either this Subcommittee or the Full Committee to offer a full explanation. And we should have responded by now, positively, affirmatively, to Representative Betty McCollum's request to determine how billions of dollars were stolen from the interim Iraqi Defense Ministry.

Let me quote pertinent sections of her letter to myself, to Chairman Rohrabacher, Chairman Hyde, and Ranking Member Tom Lantos. This is her language:

"I am requesting that the Committee on International Relations conduct oversight hearings immediately to investigate reports of massive corruption and theft inside the United States-appointed Iraqi Interim Government. In light of the fact that Congress has not held a single hearing on the United States role in Iraq in the 109th Congress, we must not advocate our oversight responsibility or avoid confronting this unprecedented level of corruption when Americans continue to sacrifice so much.

"The head of Iraq's Commission on Public Integrity, Radhi al-Radhi, was quoted as saying that between \$1.3 and \$2.7 billion was missing from the Defense Ministry. He called this massive corruption 'possibly the world's largest robbery.' This massive theft over the 8-month life of Iraq's American-appointed Interim Government equals, and likely exceeds, the kickbacks received by Saddam Hussein during the six years of the UN Oil-for-Food program. There can be no doubt that if these allegations of corruption and theft in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense prove conclusive, Iraq's capability to train and equip their military force will have been severely diminished. This diminished capacity limits the ability of Iraqi forces to confront the insurgency, placing a much greater burden on American troops. Committee Members have a job to do, and hearings on U.S. policy in Iraq must not be excluded from the Committee's responsibility."

Mr. Chairman, I believe that if we do not respond to Congresswoman McCollum's request, a very legitimate request, our own credibility is on the line.

There is more we could look into. We could examine why the Bush Administration continues to give contracts to certain companies, even when there are credible allegations of their wasteful spending and corruption in Iraq. For example, a review board just determined that Kellogg, Brown & Root must repay over \$200 million to the Iraqi Government for work that was carried out at inflated prices or was done poorly.

We could examine the role of Ahmed Chalabi in feeding false intelligence to the United States, and why certain people in the Bush Administration set up an operation involving him and others to bypass the CIA and other intelligence services who warned us that Chalabi was a liar and should not be trusted. I should note that he is under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for leaking classified information to Iran, whose President just called for Israel to be wiped off the map.

But Chalabi is in Washington this week to meet with senior Bush Administration officials. I would only describe that as unbelievable.

And that is just Iraq. There are so many other issues that need congressional oversight. For example, United States support for thugs and dictators in Central Asia, like Karimov in Uzbekistan and Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan. We ought to be talking about the Administration's ambiguous attitude toward terrorists who attack our enemies, like the MEK (Mujadehin-e Khalq Organization) or Luis Posada Carriles, who blew up a Cuban airliner with 76 innocents aboard back in 1976.

But finally, Mr. Chairman, I have one request. Our investigation into the Oil-for-Food Program has made it very clear that three U.S. Administrations, both Democratic and Republican, bear some responsibility for the program's failure. That is because the U.S. sits on the UN Security Council, and therefore, was part of a so-called 661 Committee which oversaw the UN sanctions regime. Frankly, the 661 Committee did not do a very good job at oversight. For example, we know that the 661 Committee ignored the Secretariat's warning of overpricing on approximately 70 Oil-for-Food contracts. As a result, Saddam Hussein was able to make money off these contracts.

We have discussed this and other Security Council oversight failures again and again and again, but they have never been addressed. We had one hearing involving Syria. Let us bring somebody from all Administrations, both Republican and Democratic, before this Committee to get some answers.

Hopefully, Mr. Chairman, we are going to address this and other issues. But I will associate myself with your remarks regarding the subject matter of today's hearing.

Unfortunately, I have to attend another meeting at approximately 3 o'clock, so I am going to excuse myself at 3 o'clock and hand over my gavel, my small little gavel, to either Mr. Berman—well, actually Mr. Schiff.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Whew. Thanks for that opening statement. I appreciate it. Maybe some day that will be relevant to the hearing that we are having.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Hopefully.

Mr. BERMAN. It is up to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let us note for the record that I have had many ideas of my own that I would like to have followed up through this year, and we have focused on the United Nations Oil-for-Food scandal, and we have provided the public and decision-makers with enormous amounts of information that is important for the American people to understand when they are determining what they believe is the proper course for our Government and for the people as a whole: Should we be putting more faith in institutions like the United Nations, which has been advocated by other Members, my friends on the other side of the aisle, especially during Presidential campaigns? Or is the United Nations flawed, perhaps fatally, by the fact that many of the members of the United Nations are certainly not democratic by any stretch of the imagina-

tion and often the regimes that influence the United Nations are corrupt?

Is this important for the American people to know, how that affects our decision-making, when to rely on the United Nations? I think it is a very important issue, and we covered it thoroughly, and we can be proud that the American people fully understand that even in one program, like the Oil-for-Food Program, a humane program with a humane purpose, that the dictator that touched it was able to corrupt the entire process, and in fact, corrupted anyone who touched it.

So, it was worthwhile investigating. We had to forego a lot of other issues that I would have liked to have covered. Next year, we are going to cover a lot more issues, and I will certainly be discussing them with my colleagues from the other side of the aisle.

We will yield for 1 minute for everybody else to have an opening statement. Mr. Berman?

Mr. BERMAN. I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Now that we have discussed what is not on the agenda, just a moment on the agenda. In recent days, there have been several articles full of allegations about mismanagement and malfeasance at Alhurra. I have no idea if there is any truth to these charges. I find some of them very hard to believe, particularly the ones that come from anonymous sources. I am skeptical because a number of the people I know and respect, even some who are critics of Alhurra, the concept of Alhurra, believe Mr. Harb, in particular, has done a phenomenal job in getting the station off the ground.

Today's hearing is important because it gives Mr. Harb and Chairman Tomlinson an opportunity to answer their critics, and hopefully clear the air. I am concerned that as we focus on specific issues of one contract or another, how much was paid for a hairstylist, we lose sight of what we are really trying to accomplish.

This war on terrorism is much more than a military struggle, it is a war of ideas. Broadcasting is the only means for America to reach out to the broader public in the Arab world. There are many important aspects of public diplomacy, but broadcasting is the only way to reach out to the much larger cross-section of the public to explain our policies, to expose them to our values, and free them from the sin of Aljazeera or other seemingly biased Middle East media outlets.

Let's be realistic. Watching Alhurra isn't going to turn a committed terrorist into an American supporter, but for the vast majority of Arabs who remain open to alternative views, the station can serve as an important source of information.

People are watching. According to a recent survey data, 46 percent of the Syrians, 45 percent of Iraqis, 30 percent of Lebanese, and 28 percent of Jordanians watch Alhurra on a weekly basis. The numbers could be even higher, since some people in the region may be reluctant to divulge the fact that they are watching an American station. Equally as important, large percentages of Alhurra viewers in almost every country consider the news to be reliable. Overall, more than 20 million people in the Middle East are watching Alhurra. That is an impressive number, particularly considering the station was assembled from scratch in 6 months, open for business only 18 months ago.

Is Alhurra perfect? Of course not. There is always room for improvement, and I think they are working hard to get better. In response to some of these allegations in the media about financial improprieties, Chairman Tomlinson and the other members of the Broadcasting Board of Governors asked the State Department Inspector General to conduct an audit of Alhurra with a special focus on the contracts that seem to concern the majority here.

Let's look at these different issues. Let us offer constructive criticism, but let's not dignify baseless allegations that Alhurra's critics in the region will gladly use to undermine the station's credibility. It is not just Alhurra's reputation that is at stake, it is our larger effort to drain the swamp and promote a stable and prosperous Middle East.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, thank you, Mr. Berman. You were a little bit more than 1 minute, but that is okay.

Mr. BERMAN. But I didn't talk about things I would like to have a hearing on.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. Now Mr. Wilson from South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to echo Congressman Berman, and I appreciate your comments, and indeed, I believe that the mission that we have before us is to create a stable, I hope, prosperous Middle East. I think it is exciting that there can be a positive presentation of the historic elections in Iraq and Afghanistan, and of the fact that Libya has disarmed. People need to know how significant it is that Muammar Ghadafi has made an effort and reached out to be part of the civilized world. How extraordinary it is that Syria has withdrawn from Lebanon. It is relevant that women can vote in Kuwait. We can recognize there were Presidential elections in Egypt and local elections in Saudi Arabia. In the world's largest Muslim country, Indonesia, there were Presidential elections. There is so much positivity that can be told.

I want to wish you well in your efforts, especially with a son who served for a year in Iraq, who has returned and now does PowerPoint presentations throughout our region. He had a very positive experience about the wonderful and courageous people of Iraq, who are very pleased and proud to be free and liberated.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you for that statement, Mr. Wilson. We appreciate that.

Adam Schiff.

Mr. SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your calling this hearing. I look at this really as a more specific follow up of the hearing that has just preceded it with Secretary Hughes on the broader effort to reach out and help shape in a more positive way the American image abroad.

I think the effort at Alhurra is extraordinarily important, and I know there are really two sets of issues on the table today. There are the issues over the allegations regarding contracting, which I don't know the merits of, and we will, I am sure, get some information about that. But the broader issues, and for me the most weighty issues, involve whether we are succeeding in our outreach through Alhurra and Radio Sawa.

The ACNielsen findings, I think, are very impressive; the market share that both enjoy is quite astounding, given the short tenure of both. Radio Sawa is practically off the chart. Maybe because I come from the entertainment capital of the world, the criticism of Radio Sawa, that it has a small news content compared to the entertainment content, misses the point. If people don't listen to it, you are not going to reach people. Whatever kind of entertaining programming you need to do to get people to listen during the time when you do air the news, I think is very important.

With respect to Alhurra, I have been very interested in this since my visits to Iraq and my discussions with then President Allawi about Alhurra. I had a chance to come out and meet with Mr. Harb and get a tour of Alhurra, and I was very impressed that a professional operation had been established in the short space of time.

The questions I really have today are how effective are we, what can we do to improve our outreach and effectiveness? I see in the materials, for example, that Sawa can't be heard in Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia or Syria except on AM. I am interested in knowing why. Maybe the U.S. Government can help get you on the FM to expand your outreach.

I hope, in addition to looking at the cost-effectiveness of the operation, which is something we need to scrutinize in every department of government, that we also look at the broader points about how can we further this effort—and I will conclude in 1 second, Mr. Chairman—because there is no alternative. We have to find a way to be successful in this electronic outreach. It is just one tool, but it is a vitally important one. There just isn't a substitute. So it is not a question for me of whether we shut down Alhurra or Radio Sawa. They are going to go on. They have to. The only question is, how do we improve outreach and effectiveness?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. And you ended exactly on the right note, what can we do to improve the effectiveness of this operation, and that is what this hearing is all about today.

I would like to welcome our first panel to today's hearing, Broadcasting Board of Governors and Alhurra Television.

Our first witness is the Honorable Ken Tomlinson, Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees all non-military United States international broadcasting, including Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio and TV Marti, and the new broadcasting initiatives in the Middle East.

Mr. Tomlinson has served in many distinguished positions. In 1982, President Reagan appointed him as Director of Voice of America, where he served until 1984. Mr. Tomlinson also served as Editor-in-Chief of *Reader's Digest* between 1989 and 1996.

Let me note that I have followed Mr. Tomlinson's career, and would testify that he is a person of very high levels of integrity, honesty and professionalism. He is a person I have deeply admired, watching him from both a distance and seeing him close-up. We are very, very happy to have him with us today.

His belief in balanced and honest programming has brought him into conflict with some people in this town who see public broadcasting as their own domain and not the domain of the American

taxpayers, who would want more of a balanced approach to some of these broadcasting efforts. You don't get anything done in this town unless you make enemies, and Ken Tomlinson has been trying to improve things and has taken some hits for it. So I appreciate what he has done for his country and what he is doing in terms of what we are discussing today, broadcasting to the Middle East, which is so important for our national security and to avert war in the future. I have personal respect for the man who is overseeing this.

Our second witness, Mr. Mouafac Harb, News Director of Alhurra, the 24-hour Arabic news and information satellite television network which broadcasts in the Middle East. Mr. Harb joined Radio Sawa in 2002 as News Director. Mr. Harb was also named Executive Vice President for the Middle East Broadcasting Network in 2004, which oversees Alhurra Television and Radio Sawa. Prior to joining Radio Sawa and Alhurra, Mr. Harb served as Washington, DC, Bureau Chief for the *al Hayat* newspaper.

I want to thank you both for coming today. I apologize for putting the accent on the wrong words there, but we are looking forward to your testimony.

If I could implore you, your full statements will be made part of the record. As good journalists, you should be able to condense it down to 5 minutes. We will be looking forward to that.

You may proceed.

Also with us, by the way, is Mr. Bert Kleinman, who I understand has just resigned from Alhurra.

Mr. KLEINMAN. Excuse me, no, I have not resigned. My family is in Los Angeles, and last July I respectfully requested that the BBG start recruiting so I could return to my family. I am here until there is a replacement, but no, I have not resigned.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The Sandra Day O'Connor of broadcasting. Thanks so much.

Mr. Tomlinson, you may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KENNETH Y. TOMLINSON,
CHAIRMAN, BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Mr. TOMLINSON. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Delahunt, Members of the Subcommittee, I am accompanied today by a number of members of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Blanquita Collum, Norman Pattiz and Jeffrey Hirschberg. Thank you so much for joining us.

Mr. Chairman, can you imagine if on the day after 9/11, someone had told us within 2½ years the United States would have a TV network broadcasting in Arabic from Morocco to Iraq to Yemen, that the network would have more than 20 million weekly viewers, that the majority of its audience would call its news reliable? We would have called that astonishing. Yet today, Alhurra Television broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to viewers all over the Middle East.

In a typical week, more than 150 Alhurra journalists around the world produce 40 hours of news, 24 hours of debates and talk shows, 33 hours of current affairs programs, as well as groundbreaking town hall meetings carried live from places like Damascus and Beirut, Cairo, Khartoum, and even from a Pales-

tinian refugee camp in South Lebanon. These town hall meetings feature debates and intelligent discussion on issues few others in the Arab media would dare tackle: Freedom and democracy in the Middle East, women's rights in the Arab world, and the challenge of global terrorism.

As one of Alhurra's first supporters, President Bush himself first foresaw that we have to recognize the ultimate truth about the war on terror. This war will not be won by force of arms alone. We must defeat the terrorists on the battlefield and we must also defeat them in the battle of ideas.

I am in a good position to tell the Alhurra story, because my role has largely been that of an enthusiastic cheerleader. The real heroes are in the Bush White House and the House and Senate. I think particularly of Chairman Frank Wolf and my colleagues, Norman Pattiz and Mouafac Harb, about whom I will have more to say later on. They also deserve praise for the heralded success of Radio Sawa.

We started with nothing: No building, no equipment, no cables, no light, no programs, no teleprompters, no news wires and no employees. All the while, the anti-American Arab media continued to spew out hatred on a daily basis and distort American policies and what America stands for.

We found a home in a 27,000-square-foot leased space out in an industrial park in Springfield, Virginia. Over the next 4½ months, electricians and engineers worked intensely, 24 hours a day, to lay over 200 miles of wiring connecting to 13 broadcast servers and 200 computers and desktop editing stations, plus 10 incoming fiber optic video lines and 4 news gathering satellites.

Of course, getting Alhurra Television on the air in record time wasn't just about laying miles of wire. We needed to recruit a staff of highly-skilled professionals committed to our mission, good journalists with experience in Arabic language television.

As Alhurra's structure quickly came together, we saw a sea of Middle Eastern faces there. Seventy-five journalists from 13 countries were recruited with a worldwide news gathering operation set up in cooperation with the Associated Press, TV news and correspondents throughout the Middle East.

That is how in mere months, the United States opened a new window for Arabic-speaking TV viewers all over the Middle East, a window on truth.

You may have seen the BBC's recent announcement that they plan to launch a 12-hour-a-day Arabic channel 2 years from now. In the war on terror, we didn't have the luxury to wait.

A year-and-a-half after Alhurra launched in February 2004, the respected ACNielsen Research Company conducted the largest single media survey ever done in the Middle East, over 14,000 face-to-face interviews. That survey, along with other surveys, as Congressman Berman referenced, marked a remarkable audience. From zero, we grew to more than 21 million viewers in these countries to date, and there are likely to be millions more in countries yet to be surveyed, which get Alhurra by satellite.

You heard the percentage figures, and you heard the vast majority of people who are watching us consider our news reliable. Alhurra obtained these impressive results despite an aggressive

campaign against this channel by many who dislike American policy in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, I must tell you how incredulous I was to read in the *Financial Times* that there are "doubts over these claimed audience figures." How can we please these people? Are they so intent to politically challenge Alhurra that they won't take ACNielsen?

This country recently observed the fourth anniversary of 9/11. We marked it on Alhurra with a 2-hour special town hall meeting on terrorism in Arab countries. How did our competitors mark the anniversary of 9/11? Aljazeera showed the Michael Moore film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

President Bush said it best last month when he told the National Endowment of Democracy that militants are aided as well by elements of the Arab news media that incite hatred and anti-Semitism, that feed conspiracy theories and speak of the so-called America's war on Islam with seldom a word about what American actions have done to protect Muslims in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq.

Allow me to single out two individuals whose contributions should be spotlighted. First, my colleague, Norm Pattiz.

Norm Pattiz is a builder. He knows how to get things done and this Nation owes him a great debt for what he threw into building Alhurra, a state-of-the-art broadcast operation. Many of you have seen it. Second, we owe a great deal to the tireless and dedicated News Director, Mouafac Harb, whom I have found to be both an outstanding journalist and an individual dedicated to freedom and democracy.

Which brings me to the present. We have concluded the herculean task of quickly getting on the air and achieving impressive results. Now we have begun an active search for a new and highly-skilled president to succeed Bert Kleinman, someone with a strong management background.

Since the launch has been concluded, we, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, asked the State Department inspector general to examine all the contracts in question and examine all of our procurement procedures, as we have done with other entities. We are working closely with the GAO (Government Accountability Office), which is examining what we are doing.

Neither taxpayers' interests nor good government practices should be left out of Alhurra's success story. We rushed to get on the air. Now we want to manage and maintain the program in the most cost-efficient and transparent way possible. Covering the news in a time of war is hardly an exact science. We remain proud of our people who are doing this job day in and day out under extremely difficult circumstances.

You only have to look at the bombing of the Palestine Hotel a couple of weeks ago where Alhurra is located, which caused considerable damage to our facilities and injured a number of our journalists. And, of course, we lost a great correspondent, Abdul-Hussein Khazal, in February 2005, killed just 9 days after the first Parliamentary election, just days after he covered that election.

These professionals gave the people of Iraq debates among candidates, the first televised debate in a democratic election in the history of the Arab world. On election day in Iraq, people were able

to see that within hours after a bombing of a polling booth, with blood still on the street, people were lining up to vote.

Mr. Chairman, we are proud of our record, and we look forward to answering your questions. Mouafac Harb has a prepared statement also, and we stand ready to answer your questions. We thank you so much.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Tomlinson.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Tomlinson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KENNETH Y. TOMLINSON, CHAIRMAN,
BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Chairman Rohrabacher, Ranking Member Delahunt, and members of the Subcommittee—Thank you for inviting me here today for this hearing.

Can you imagine if on the day after 9/11 someone had told us that within two and a half years the United States would have a TV network broadcasting in Arabic from Morocco to Iraq to Yemen, that the network would have 20 million weekly viewers, that the majority of its audience would call the news reliable? Can you imagine if someone would have said U.S.-sponsored television would be sent to the Middle East unfiltered and uncensored—and that U.S. policy would be reported truthfully to millions of Arab TV viewers every week?

We would have called all this astonishing.

Today Alhurra Television broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week to viewers all over the Middle East. In a typical week, more than 150 Alhurra journalists around the world produce 40 hours of news, 24 hours of debates and talk shows, 33 hours of current affairs programs, as well as groundbreaking town hall meetings carried live from places like Damascus, Beirut, Cairo, Khartoum—and even from a Palestinian refugee camp in south Lebanon. These town hall meetings feature debates and intelligent discussion on issues few others in the Arab media would dare tackle: freedom and democracy in the Middle East, women's rights in the Arab world, and the challenge of global terrorism.

As one of Alhurra's first supporters—President Bush—himself foresaw, we have to recognize the ultimate truth about the war on terror: "[T]his war will not be won by force of arms alone. We must defeat the terrorists on the battlefield and we must also defeat them in the battle of ideals. . . . In the long run, the only way to achieve lasting peace is to offer a hopeful alternative to the terrorist ideology of hatred and fear by spreading the hope of freedom across the broader Middle East."

That's why President Bush's White House supported the launch of a new satellite television channel called Alhurra. Chairman Frank Wolf and a bipartisan coalition of Senators and Congressmen kick started the project by adding it to a war-time supplemental. As ever, we had the strong support of Senator Joe Biden, the political father of this Board. In the summer of 2003, we went to work.

I am in a good position to tell the Alhurra story because my role has largely been that of a cheerleader. The real heroes are in the Bush White House and in the House and Senate and my colleagues Norm Pattiz and Mouafac Harb, about whom I'll have more to say later on. They also deserve our praise for the heralded success of Radio Sawa, our youth-oriented service to the Arab world.

We started with nothing. No building. No equipment. No cables, no lights. No programs, no TelePromTers, no newswires—and no employees. All the while, the anti-American Arab media continued to spew out hatred on a daily basis and distort America's policies and what America stands for. And within months after establishing Alhurra, we were on the air. Even the private sector doesn't work that fast.

We found our home in 27,000 square feet of leased space in an industrial park in Springfield, Virginia. Over the next four and one-half months, electricians and engineers working intensely 24 hours a day laid over 200 miles of wiring connected to 13 broadcast servers and 200 computers and desktop news editing stations, plus ten incoming fiber optic video lines and four news gathering satellites. We installed news studios, control rooms and edit facilities—all in the shell of a building.

Of course, getting Alhurra Television on the air in record time wasn't just about laying miles of wire and installing state-of-the-art-studios and control rooms. It was about creating a new organization from scratch and designing and launching a 24/7 news and information TV channel in the second-most competitive TV market in the world, the Middle East, challenging one of the most powerful TV news channels in the world, Aljazeera. For that, we needed to recruit a staff of highly skilled professionals committed to our mission—good journalists with experience in Arabic-language TV.

And who were these people joining us? Who would leave their homes and their families to move across the Atlantic and work for a new American television channel? During the recruiting interviews, we were fortunate to meet some remarkable and brave journalists. We learned that they were motivated by a chance to practice journalism without being a mouthpiece of any Arab regime. We learned that they felt driven to fulfill Alhurra's mission of freedom and democracy—and freedom of speech.

As Alhurra's structure quickly came together, we saw a sea of Middle Eastern faces—newsmen and newswomen—enthusiastically preparing, midst working carpenters and electricians, to launch the network. Over 75 experienced journalists from 13 countries were recruited and trained; a worldwide news gathering operation was set up in cooperation with Associated Press TV News with correspondents across the Middle East; and news and current affairs staffs were organized to produce hourly newscasts, two one-hour prime-time daily newscasts as well as daily roundtables, talk shows and magazine shows. A Baghdad bureau was established, and staff hired throughout Iraq for Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq local news coverage.

And that's how in mere months the U.S. opened a new window for Arabic-speaking TV viewers all over the Middle East. A window on the truth. You may have seen the BBC's recent announcement that it's planning to launch a 12-hour Arabic channel—two years from now. In the war on terror, we didn't have the luxury to wait.

A year and a half after Alhurra launched in February 2004, the respected ACNielsen research company conducted the largest single media survey ever done in the Middle East with over 14,000 face-to-face interviews. That survey, along with others done by prominent research firms, documented that Alhurra's weekly adult audience had grown from zero to over 21 million viewers in those countries surveyed to date and there are likely millions more in countries yet to be surveyed which receive Alhurra. For example, weekly viewership of Alhurra among adults in households with a satellite TV stands at 28% in Jordan, 30% in Lebanon, 45% in Iraq, and 46% in urban Syria. And equally important, the vast majority of Alhurra viewers in most countries indicated they consider the news reliable. Alhurra attained these impressive results despite an aggressive campaign against the channel by many who dislike American policy in the Middle East. Mr. Chairman, I must tell you how incredulous I was to read in the *Financial Times* that there are "doubts over its claimed audience figures." Doubts about figures provided by ACNielsen and other respected research firms? How can we please these people? They are so intent to politically challenge Alhurra that they even take on ACNielsen.

What is the audience seeing? Alhurra introduces to the region ideas of truth and freedom and democracy never before discussed. Alhurra brings to the vast region of the Middle East unprecedented town hall meetings, talk shows, and debates. We are not afraid to present opposing sides. We win merely by providing the forum for conversations about human rights and economics and the role of women in society. We have to continue to foster these conversations, these debates, until they become a part of the lives of the people of this region, until they become part of life in the Islamic world.

During prime time each evening, Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq feature several one-hour newscasts, including live reports from Washington and the Middle East. They also include in-depth discussion programs such as the one-hour talk show, "Free Hour," as well as high-quality current affairs programs and documentaries—produced by Alhurra or acquired from leading international TV news organizations. In addition to news, Alhurra airs informational programs on a diverse range of topics such as health, technology, sports, and special events designed to appeal to a broad audience. Outside prime time, the two channels broadcast news and news updates twice an hour, interrupting regular programming, as events warrant, to air breaking news, including coverage of major U.S. foreign policy speeches and congressional hearings.

Yes, the Arab street can finally hear what the President, Secretary of State, and Members of Congress are saying—without filter. And real issues and debates can be presented substantively and intelligently—an intellectually vigorous alternative to the tabloid-style, victim-based fare that Arab viewers are constantly exposed to.

This country recently observed the fourth anniversary of 9/11. Alhurra marked it with a two-hour special town hall meeting on terrorism in Arab countries. The prime time town hall meeting brought together students and experts from the Middle East to discuss how terrorism has affected their lives personally, and the impact terrorism has had on different Arab nations politically. And how did our competitors mark the anniversary of 9/11? Aljazeera showed the Michael Moore film "Fahrenheit 9/11."

President Bush said it best last month when he told the National Endowment for Democracy: "The militants are aided, as well, by elements of the Arab news media

that incite hatred and anti-Semitism, that feed conspiracy theories and speak of a so-called American 'war on Islam'—with seldom a word about American action to protect Muslims in Afghanistan, and Bosnia, Somalia, Kosovo, Kuwait, and Iraq.”

A recently published Pew Global Attitudes Project survey from Morocco shows a 22-point increase in favorable attitudes toward the United States among Moroccans. Why? The U.S. Ambassador to Morocco notes that the one factor that has changed in U.S.-Morocco relations is that Radio Sawa has become the most popular radio station in that country, “appears to be having a major impact” and “may be making headway in changing perceptions of the U.S. among its Moroccan listeners.”

Allow me to single out two individuals whose contributions should be spotlighted. My colleague on the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Norman Pattiz. Norm Pattiz is a builder. He knows how to get things done. He knows how to push for and build state-of-the-art broadcast operations. And the Middle East Broadcasting Networks’ tireless and dedicated news director, Mouafac Harb, whom I have found to be both an outstanding journalist and an individual dedicated to freedom and democracy.

Which brings us to the present. We have concluded the Herculean task of quickly getting on the air and achieving impressive results. We have begun an active search for a new and highly qualified president, someone with a strong management background. Since the launch has been concluded, we have asked the State Department Inspector General to examine Alhurra’s contracts and procurement procedures. As we have done in the past with our other entity activities, we are also working closely with the GAO, which is reviewing, at the request of the House Committee on Government Reform, Radio Sawa and Alhurra’s effectiveness, accountability, and cost efficiencies.

Neither taxpayers’ interests nor good government practices should be left out of the Alhurra success story. We rushed to get on the air—now we must manage and maintain the program in the most cost-efficient and transparent ways possible. Covering news in time of war is hardly an exact science. We remain proud of the job our people are doing.

I would like to close by recognizing—and I hope you will join me in saluting—the extraordinary hard-working news professionals at Alhurra Television. They carry out its critical mission everyday, often under life-threatening circumstances. We got a stark reminder of that recently in Baghdad, when the explosion at the Palestine Hotel—where Alhurra’s bureau is located—caused considerable damage to the MBN facilities and injured some of our journalists. We lost a great correspondent, Abdul-Hussein Khazal in February 2005, killed just nine days after Iraqis voted in the first multiparty elections in half a century. These professionals gave the people of Iraq debates among candidates—the first televised debate in a democratic election in the history of the Arab world. On election day in Iraq, the people were able to see that, within hours after a bombing at a polling booth, with blood still on the street, people were lined up to vote.

And here’s how one Arabic-language newspaper—Al Quds Al Arabi, by no means friendly to the United States—described Alhurra’s coverage of the elections in Egypt: “Alhurra television emerged like a black stallion in this satellite competition, since it was able to attract normal viewers and activists alike thanks to its wide range of guests from the opposition who are not fearful of criticizing the Mubarak regime, as well as Mubarak and his family specifically, while viewers showed disinterest in Aljazeera’s coverage.” The article’s headline: “Admiring Alhurra’s Egyptian Elections Coverage; Their newscasts have become like family in the Egyptian news environment.”

Thank you—we will be happy to answer your questions.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Harb, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF MR. MOUAFAC HARB, NEWS DIRECTOR, ALHURRA TELEVISION NETWORK

Mr. HARB. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to talk about Alhurra Television.

From the beginning, we at Alhurra Television and Radio Sawa have considered ourselves a vital component in the war on terror as we use professional journalism to advance the causes of freedom and democracy. We fight on a battlefield of ideas. Our enemies are the biased perceptions that have ruled unchallenged in people’s minds since their childhoods. Our battlefield is on the televisions

and radios and the mosques and coffee houses of the Arab world where we can take on twisted dogma that may seek to kill the innocent and make saints of their murderers. This is a war of words, where the United States, until lately, had no voice.

Our weapon is the truth, and our troops are recruited largely from the ranks of people who were born elsewhere, but believe in our mission. They do so at enormous personal risk, because our people have to operate in the open in a hostile environment.

Everyone we have hired shares our sense of journalistic values. In fact, during the first round of interviews, many of them asked me if Alhurra could really be free, if it was funded by the government. My answer, of course, was yes. And if they were astute enough to be concerned about this, they had just passed a major test for getting the job. For some of my colleagues, joining the staff of Alhurra involved personal sacrifice, moving half a world away from family and friends to work for an organization that some people back home had been told to believe is their enemy.

I work with courageous people. Their continuing work has had an impact on our audience, an impact on Arab institutions, and an impact on their own lives. Alhurra has been condemned by extremist clerics and is under constant assault from Arab media outlets that are controlled by dictatorships or by wealthy Arab royals who keep newspapers and broadcast stations as personal toys.

All this has taken its toll on our staff and those courageous enough to speak out on our airwaves. Earlier this year, I talked to our correspondent in Basra, Iraq, about the Iraqi elections, and a week later I had to talk to his widow. His name is Hussein Khazal. He was shot to death in his car with his little boy at his side. Five members of our staff have been wounded. One was taken hostage and was released when the kidnappers became convinced we would not give in to their demands.

Last Friday, we broadcasted a 1-hour interview with a Syrian opposition leader. This week he was arrested, this Tuesday, actually, when he returned to Syria. And right now a former Kuwaiti official is being investigated in Kuwait for accusations he made last month against Alhurra. And as we speak right now, Mr. Chairman, we are airing a broadcast on reform in Saudi Arabia, and I wonder how their media outlets would react to that tomorrow about Alhurra.

Given the price in lives and treasure, we, like you, ask ourselves constantly how we are doing in fulfilling our long-term goals of promoting freedom and democracy. Our distinct role in seeking to accomplish these goals is to be an example of a free professional press in the American tradition. This is, in fact, our mandate from Congress, but we cannot be successful unless we reach a significant audience and that audience finds our news to be reliable.

Independent research consistently shows that on both scores after only 18 months on the air, we are achieving success. Surveys across the Middle East carried out by ACNielsen this year show weekly viewing rates for Alhurra in satellite-equipped households from 7 percent to 46 percent with a median score of 28 percent. These same surveys reveal news reliability scores ranging from 43 percent to 92 percent, with a median score of 73 percent.

Some critics assert, yes, but Alhurra is not the number one choice for news in the Middle East, to which I respond it is not whether we are the first choice, but whether we are a choice at all. And we are. As our audience research shows, if Arabs watch other channels and then tune in to us, we still advance our mission, and we should remember Aljazeera and Al-Arabiya expressly cater to an overwhelmingly anti-American audience.

Other critics allege that, yes, you have decent audience numbers, but you have failed to move the needle, and in effect, to reduce that very anti-Americanism. Once again, we need perspective. Congress asked us to provide objective and accurate news and information and to explain U.S. policy, believing that even if audiences do not like the policies or us, if they at least understand us, then we have done our job. And that is what we do, day in and day out.

In a perfect world, there would be no need for Alhurra in the countries we serve, because they would have a free press and media that serve the cause of advancing a positive modern vision of democracy, peace, and prosperity in the region. But indigenous media in the Middle East, regardless of their popularity, are not now uniformly and consistently serving these purposes. Alhurra and Sawa do.

Before Alhurra and Sawa, United States international broadcasting had a weekly Middle East audience of approximately 2 million people. Today, Alhurra alone reaches over 20 million, and the two stations together have an unduplicated weekly audience of over 35 million. As I said at the start, prior to Alhurra and Sawa, the U.S. had no effective voice in the region. Clearly today we do.

I would like to thank the entire Board of Governors for their unwavering support for this program and for giving me the chance to be part of this important project for my adopted country.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Harb follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. MOUAFAC HARB, NEWS DIRECTOR, ALHURRA
TELEVISION NETWORK

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to talk about Alhurra Television.

From the beginning, we at Alhurra Television and Radio Sawa have considered ourselves a vital component in the war on terror, as we use professional journalism to advance the cause of freedom and democracy. We fight on a battlefield of ideas; our enemies are the biased perceptions that have ruled unchallenged in people's minds since their childhoods.

Our battlefield is on the televisions and radios, in the mosques and coffee houses of the Arab world, where we can take on twisted dogma that may seek to kill the innocent and make saints of their murderers. This is a war of words where the United States—until lately—had no voice.

Our weapon is the truth, and our troops are recruited largely from the ranks of people who were born elsewhere but believe in our mission. They do so at enormous personal risk because our people have to operate in the open in a hostile environment.

Everyone we've hired shares our sense of journalistic values. In fact, during the first round of interviews, many of them asked me if Alhurra could really be free if it was funded by the government. My answer, of course, was yes. And if they were astute enough to be concerned about this, they had just passed a major test for getting the job.

For some of my colleagues, joining the staff of Alhurra involved personal sacrifice—moving half a world away from family and friends to work for an organization that some people back home have been taught to believe is their enemy. I work with courageous people. Their continuing work has had an impact on our audience,

an impact on Arab institutions and an impact on their own lives. Alhurra has been condemned by extremist clerics, and is under constant assault from Arabic media outlets that are controlled by dictatorships, or by wealthy Arab royals who keep newspapers and broadcast stations as personal toys. All this has taken its toll on our staff and those courageous enough to speak out on our airwaves.

Earlier this year, our correspondent in Basra (Iraq), Abdel Hussein Khazaal was shot to death in his car with his little boy at his side. Five members of our staff have been wounded. One was taken hostage and was released when the kidnappers became convinced we would not cave in to their demands.

Last Friday we broadcast a 1-hour interview with a Syrian opposition leader. Yesterday, he was arrested when he returned to Syria. And right now, a former Kuwaiti official is being investigated in Kuwait for accusations he made last month on Alhurra.

Given the price in lives and treasure, we—like you—ask ourselves constantly how we are doing in fulfilling our long-term goals of promoting freedom and democracy. Our distinct role in seeking to accomplish these goals is to be an example of a free, professional press in the American tradition. This is, in fact, our mandate from Congress. But we cannot be successful unless we reach a significant audience and that audience finds our news to be reliable.

Independent research consistently shows that, on both scores after only 18 months on the air, we are achieving success. Surveys across the Middle East carried out by ACNielsen this year show weekly viewing rates for Alhurra in satellite-equipped households from 7% to 46% with a median score of 28%. These same surveys reveal news reliability scores ranging from 43% to 92% with a median score of 73%.

Some critics assert, “yes, but Alhurra is not the number one choice for news in the Middle East.” To which I respond, it’s not whether we are the first choice but whether we are a choice at all. And we are—as our audience research shows. If Arabs watch other channels and then tune to us, we still advance our mission. And we should remember, Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya expressly cater to an overwhelmingly anti-American audience.

Other critics allege that, “yes, you have decent audience numbers, but you have failed ‘to move the needle’”—in effect, to reduce that very anti-Americanism. Once again, we need perspective. Congress asks us to provide objective and accurate news and information and to explain U.S. policy, believing that even if audiences do not like the policies or us, if they at least understand us, then we will have done our job. And that’s what we do, day in and day out.

In a perfect world, there would be no need for Alhurra in the countries we serve because they would have a free press and media that served the cause of advancing a positive, modern vision for democracy, peace, and prosperity in the region. But indigenous media in the Middle East, regardless of their popularity, are not now uniformly and consistently serving these purposes. Alhurra and Sawa do.

Before Alhurra and Sawa, U.S. international broadcasting had a weekly Middle East audience of approximately two million people. Today, Alhurra alone reaches over 20 million and the two stations together have an unduplicated weekly audience of over 37 million. As I said at the start, prior to Alhurra and Sawa, the U.S. had no effective voice in the region. Clearly, today we do.

I would like to thank the entire Board of Governors for their unwavering support of this program and for giving me the chance to be part of this important project for my adopted country.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

You are not scheduled to be a witness here, Mr. Kleinman, but do you have something you would like to throw into this? I know you don’t have any written testimony.

Mr. KLEINMAN. I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that I thought that in your statement, you encapsulated our mission and what we are trying to do extremely well when you talked about making the Middle East less susceptible to hate, more accepting of freedom and democracy, conveying the principles and values of America, and being a positive force. This is exactly what Alhurra and Radio Sawa are all about.

We, of course, will be happy to answer your questions. Thank you.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, that was certainly the right answer, wasn’t it.

I will then proceed. Again, when we are talking about possible areas where you could be doing better, such criticism is not actually a bad thing. Let us note that those of us who are former journalists, which I am, understand that actually sometimes confronting shortcomings can actually strengthen things in the long run. The purpose of this hearing is not at all to weaken your operation.

Ken?

Mr. TOMLINSON. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman. We recognize that. It is also interesting to note, though, we have been on the air for a year-and-a-half. We have not had to retract a single story on Alhurra, and that is a record shared by very few journalistic enterprises in this world. We, of course, look forward to working with you to improve. But we are very proud of our record.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. I will proceed with my time period to question.

One of the major areas that people have concerns about—and, Mr. Tomlinson, you hit on this in your testimony—is the credibility of the statistics in terms of the listening audience. We have invested a great deal of money. There are some people who believe that perhaps the listening audience is not as good as suggested.

I take it that you are open to people who would scrutinize that listening audience. For example, the State Department's Office of Research would try to look into that issue; you would be open to that?

Mr. TOMLINSON. Absolutely. We have a long, long record of statistical excellence in the research the Broadcasting Board of Governors and our predecessors have commissioned over the years. In fact, Mark Rhodes, the President of Intermedia, is in this room, and he can answer any questions you have about commissioning firms like ACNielsen to do this research. It can't get any sounder.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. And that is an important commitment, because some of the people who want us to look into it contend that there is no sense in investing in something that doesn't have a listening audience.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Our doors and books are open, and we welcome you and your staff and critics to come in and examine what we have done.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right, I appreciate that.

I have a couple of questions about specific decisions, management decisions, that were made. In terms of your relationship with Associated Press, for example, you rely on it. Associated Press uses the information that they gather for you for their own operation, sometimes before you are able to use it, I understand.

Is this type of outsourcing something that you could justify here—and was that done in an open bid with Associated Press rather than just a single-source bid?

Mr. HARB. Mr. Chairman, there is no television channel that can operate nowadays without having a contract with the Associated Press television news service, APTN. This is where we get the footage.

However, APTN has a unique service, the Middle East Service (MES), whereby they have established a presence in addition to

what they do in every single Arab capital and around the world, and they provide this for channels our size.

This relationship with APTN Middle East Service, and I don't think there is any other service in the Middle East or around the world that provides that service, in addition to the TV footage they provide, allowed us to be present from day one in every single Arab capital. All we have to do is find the editorial or the journalists and reporters, and they work out of the facilities of APTN. So APTN simply serves as a production facility for our correspondents and reporters.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. Now, with your reporters, do you have a policy—as people have told our staff—is there a policy of not rushing to breaking news events and basically maybe relying on AP, rather than having your people there?

Mr. HARB. We preserve and reserve the full control of the editorial content of all of APTN's reports that are aired on Alhurra. Again, APTN releases service. All that they provide us with is cameramen, drivers, and editing facility. Again, this was key to us at the beginning, because it was so difficult in certain areas to operate in the open. Sometimes we ask our correspondent if they find it inappropriate to use the mike flag, for security reasons. So the editorial control of the content is solely that of Alhurra.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Being a former newsman myself, do you have news bureaus in various countries, or do you just rely on AP?

Mr. HARB. It is a hybrid. MBN made a decision not to invest in a physical presence in the Middle East due to the security situation, except in a few places, like in Baghdad and Dubai and sometimes in Beirut. Yes, we do have our own. But we decided from day one, because our funding comes on an annual basis and we don't want to invest in a technology that is advancing so fast, the main thing is the message and the content, and it is always under review.

But, yes, in certain places like Baghdad, where the volume of information is coming steadily and we have Alhurra-Iraq, yes, we have invested in our own facility and our own news bureau. We have one in Amman, we have one in Dubai, and we have a large operation in Baghdad, sir.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Mr. Chairman, I think it is also important to note that Alhurra is on the air and doing an excellent job for a fraction of what others are spending for Aljazeera and other broadcast networks.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right, that is an important point to make. But wouldn't it be better to have a bureau? You have one in Iraq. But wouldn't it be better to have a bureau in other areas that are more likely to have breaking news?

Mr. HARB. I would love, as a news director, to have a bureau in every single Arab city so that we can beat the competition in our news, but that has a dollar figure attached, and I am sure you don't want me to go in that direction.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You selected Lebanon as a place to base your operation. There have been some complaints, or suggestions, I should say, that perhaps there is a Lebanese tilt to your base, because you have more Lebanese. Having your operation in Lebanon

and fewer areas that you just have your own operations in various parts of the Arab world may give this a Lebanese tilt.

Mr. HARB. I am glad you mentioned that question, Mr. Chairman, because I hear that whispered in Washington, and I would like to clarify where it is coming from.

It comes from hiring. In the beginning, when we launched our channel, as Chairman Tomlinson mentioned, we had only 6 months to find, and I use the word "recruit," talent. It was not an easy task to do. That was one of the main challenges. We didn't have a lot of time.

As you know, after September 11, it became so difficult to recruit people from the Middle East. It takes time to clear them, to get them visas to come to the United States, and to settle and train them on the advanced technology that Alhurra has deployed.

We seized an opportunity early on. There was a television channel in Lebanon that was shut down by the Syrian occupation, and we found there was a nice team there, so we decided to take them immediately. There were five or six people. So the early batch of the people who joined Alhurra came from Lebanon and created that perception.

However, today it is a misperception. As we went on, we found talents—producers and writers—that come from all over the Middle East and the Arab world.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. So if there was a problem, you think you have gone—

Mr. HARB. I wouldn't characterize it as a problem, but there was a perception, and I think it is not reflected on the air today. I can give you an example. Of the twelve on-air talents that read the news on Alhurra, four or five of them are from Egypt, four of them are from Lebanon, one Qatari, two Palestinian-Americans, so we try to reflect the diversity.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me give you an example. Do you have a bureau in Egypt?

Mr. HARB. No, sir.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Just as a former newsman, just so people don't misunderstand, a bureau can be one or two people and a room?

Mr. HARB. Correct.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. In just a room. And some important things are going on in Egypt. There are forces at play, the Coptic Christian minority is under attack, and these are things that it seems to me that would justify an expense rather than sending a crew there or relying on an outside source like AP.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Mr. Chairman, we were especially proud of our coverage of the recent election in Egypt. One Arabic newspaper, which is, by no means, friendly to the United States said, "Alhurra Television emerged like a black stallion in this satellite competition, since it was able to attract normal viewers and activists alike, thanks to its wide range of guests from the opposition who are not fearful of criticizing the Mubarak regime as well as Mubarak and his family, specifically, while viewers—"

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Now, who is saying this?

Mr. TOMLINSON. This is the newspaper *Al-Quds*.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I am not sure who that is, Mr. Tomlinson, and it could well be accurate, but that doesn't mean things couldn't be better if there was an ongoing bureau there to cover those challenges.

Mr. HARB. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Do you have a bureau in Palestine, for example?

Mr. HARB. No, we don't, sir. We do have——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. There are two countries that have so much activity going on, and your news operation is relying on AP and others, or rushing your people there, which increases expense, rather than having bureaus open in those two areas.

Mr. HARB. May I briefly answer your concerns? I think they are all legitimate, and as a news director, I would love to have a bureau in every single Arab capital.

What we have right now, the most important thing is to make sure the story is out on our channel in a timely fashion and as accurately as possible. We want to be there. In Jerusalem, in Tel Aviv, in Gaza and the West Bank, we have four full-time correspondents that work for us. However, they operate out of the facility of APTN. The reason behind this is that, in order for us to have a bureau, it is going to cost satellite link most of the time. Each bureau, technically, costs at least up to \$4 million to equip. So that was a shortcut. The same thing applies, Mr. Chairman, to Cairo, as well.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That is a good answer. And let me ask one more question before I turn this over. I have already overstayed my time.

What role does this Quantum Communications play? Why do you have to have someone like an outside entity, and I believe they are editing your material or the film and various things. What role does it play and is it involved? Why do you need it?

Mr. HARB. If I can briefly answer that question, because as a news editor, I am mainly in charge of the content and the editorial process of these productions, and I think our President, Bert Kleinman, would be in a better position to explain that to you.

But I will say one thing: At the beginning, security concerns were key. A lot of people didn't want to work with us in the open. I am more focusing on the content. With your permission, I would defer that.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That is why we are happy to have you here. Maybe you could explain that. I understand you can tell us what role they played and whether or not they were able to obtain that authority on a no-bid contract.

Mr. KLEINMAN. Yes. Okay. Let's start with the fact that we had established at the beginning, both from research and anecdotally, that it was extremely important for us to be able to produce programming, not just in the United States, but also in the Middle East. We did not have the funds to establish facilities, as Mr. Harb has said, all over the Middle East.

Beirut, because of the fact that there had been free television there and there is a large community of hosts and technicians and studios there, was very attractive in terms of where we could do some production. The problem, however, is we needed to do it im-

mediately, we needed to have something that was very flexible, because we are, in fact, a news station and things change all the time, and we needed to have something that was extremely secure.

When we looked into the problems of setting up a business entity, setting up studios, setting up an accounting department or whatever in Lebanon, and at this particular time when we were starting, the Syrians were still a major factor in Lebanon, it did not become something that was really practical for us. So we sought to find a company that could handle logistics for us, where we could have our own journalists, we could hire freelance camera people, we could do studios.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. What do you mean by logistics?

Mr. KLEINMAN. Providing studios, providing telephone, providing security, providing Internet access, paying bills, doing local rentals that we had to do. It is very complicated to produce television. So our executive producer at that point went to Beirut and tried to find some companies that could do that for us, that had experience in television production and that had experience in management and that were substantial companies.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I understand what you are saying. But there wasn't a bidding process for those services?

Mr. KLEINMAN. Actually, we did speak to three companies, two of whom refused to put in bids once they found out what our security and other requirements were, and then subsequent to that we negotiated and had a sole source justification under the appropriate rules and regulations to Quantum.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. How much is the contract with Quantum?

Mr. KLEINMAN. We don't actually have a fixed contract. We don't have an obligation to them. We basically pay based on the show, on a show-by-show, episode-by-episode basis. Any agreement that we had with them and still have with them is cancellable and is not a commitment. Joe Stanton, our CFO, do you want to talk for a minute about the contractual structure?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Harb wanted to add something.

Mr. HARB. I would like to add one thing, Mr. Chairman, to bring this back into context.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Delahunt, we are—

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am going to yield back whatever time I have left to the Chair. And I have to be someplace at 3 o'clock, but I just want to ask one question. It was provoked by Mr. Tomlinson's written testimony.

You indicate that the station "gained these impressive results despite an aggressive campaign against the channel by many who dislike American policy in the Middle East." Who are these people, entities?

Mr. TOMLINSON. They are everywhere, sir.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I know they are everywhere lurking in the shadows, but who are they?

Mr. TOMLINSON. Of course, we have journalistic opposition in the Middle East, journalistic opposition dedicated to the type of journalism that we do not practice. We have critics throughout the Middle East, because after all, shining the light of truth—

Mr. DELAHUNT. I understand all about that and I am confident you are shining the light of truth, but—Mr. Harb?

Mr. HARB. I would like to take a shot at this Congressman, if you allow me.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is broad and sweeping. I see some nefarious conspiracy here, given the language utilized.

Mr. HARB. Not to go into the conspiracy theories, we fight every day on our airways.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Is this a competitor?

Mr. HARB. I would say a news operation, Congressman, that is dedicated to promoting freedom and democracy in the Arab world, and is the declared enemy of 22 Arab states and their intelligence agencies and the media outlets they fund. I don't know if that is enough.

And I can give you an example.

As we speak right now, we are airing a show on reform in Saudi Arabia, and can you imagine, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow and next week, how the Saudi-funded media outlets would react to Alhurra? Of course, they are not going to talk about democracy and——

Mr. DELAHUNT. It would appear from the language, and again we all sometimes choose words that maybe are interpreted differently than what we intended, but my point is, when I read it, I foresee some cabal going on to discredit the station as if it is a concentrated conspiracy to somehow prevent the message from getting out.

Now, there are a lot of people that don't like CNN, there are a lot of people who don't like Fox News, but I mean, other than complaining about the coverage or what they perceive to be the spin, are there forces out there that we should be aware of?

Mr. HARB. I believe—again, I don't want to go into conspiracy theories. Yes, I think there is some sort of an interest group in Washington.

I am spending most of my time doing my job, I don't have time to track them down, but I urge this Committee, every Member of this Committee, to look into those people and their motives for sending these allegations against Alhurra. And some of them are operating in this room and some may be sitting behind me. We are busy, Congressman, doing our job.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I can't pursue that line of questioning, I do have to run, but I will ask Congressman Berman to pursue it for me in my absence.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And, Mr. Harb, you had another comment?

Mr. HARB. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I had a comment to follow up on what my colleague, Mr. Kleinman, was talking about in terms of the Quantum operation, again, since I am not involved in the procurement or the contracts, but I am on the receiving end of the product, and my job is to evaluate the product and the content.

I remember when I used to go to Beirut in my stops in the Middle East, whether it was in Amman trying to recruit and hire people, or Egypt or Morocco, I was still at the time a Federal employee and I used to interview people where our Embassy in Lebanon had to send a security detail with me. So we were restricted at the time in our flexibility in moving about, and who to talk to and who we hired and who we do business with was very, very tough at the

time. But again everything is under review, and I think that is what we are doing in the moment since the Syrians left Lebanon.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let's hope that we are getting our money's worth; that is what is important; and if your operation is able to operate more efficiently with this relationship, we are just asking why. And, frankly, one of the aspects of having a government-funded operation rather than a private-funded operation, is that it is our business as to how much money is paid to various contractors, whether there were other contractors considered and whether or not somebody is helping out their brother-in-law.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Absolutely. That is why our board specifically asked the State Department IG (inspector general) to examine this and other contracts in terms of going forward. We are very proud of the effort to get on the air. We will make sure that this money is spent wisely.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. A very good answer as well.

Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think that was a good decision by the BBG. I am simultaneously in a Conference Committee on the PATRIOT Act, so I missed most of Chairman Tomlinson's testimony. I heard my colleague make reference to it.

One can understand at many different levels why there are forces that don't want Alhurra to succeed without thinking it is some interconnected, worldwide conspiracy. Every single government in the Arab world that has a government-controlled press and media, not only do they not want Alhurra to succeed, they didn't want Aljazeera to succeed, they didn't want Al-Arabia to succeed, they don't want any independent satellite radio or telecast, because it is giving out information that the controlled press in that country doesn't want their people to hear. So there is a natural tension in most—I shouldn't say every government, but in most of these governments—but they couldn't stop them.

My guess is, there are people in the context of Radio Sawa and there are people in the Arab language service of VOA who didn't like that starting up because it meant, perhaps, less resources or no resources for that. It is not evil.

Well, I think that there is something fundamentally wrong, in terms of controlling the press, with the approach of some of those governments. It certainly hasn't worked in terms of the well-being of the people of their countries. But, in other words, I think it is just a recognition of the reality and the motivations that can come, and that is why the IG report is a good place to go, because how do you determine the veracity of allegations made by anonymous sources or efforts to impede the development of it?

What they have done here is a pretty remarkable job of overcoming all of that. I am curious about the funding basis of this. As I heard this talk, how does Aljazeera finance what I take as quite an extensive operation? Whatever one thinks of what they are doing, and we know we have seen a great number of biases and a certain amount of propaganda, although I will say they do put on Americans and Israelis and people who are in opposition to governments as well as what you might view as the line.

So how does Aljazeera get its money?

Mr. HARB. From what I know, and I don't think I am revealing secrets, it is funded by the government from the oil revenues, and you know all the prices nowadays are going up. So it is unlimited funding that Aljazeera has from the Government of Qatar.

Mr. BERMAN. They don't have a reconciliation process?

Mr. HARB. Absolutely not. But from industry sources, I think each channel they have right now is costing at least \$120 million. That is what I hear from sources.

Mr. BERMAN. What is the Alhurra funding right now?

Mr. KLEINMAN. It is around \$70 million.

Mr. HARB. For both channels, Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq.

Mr. TOMLINSON. One goes to Iraq and one—

Mr. BERMAN. BBC, they have an Arab language—they have a radio service. Do they have television?

Mr. HARB. They announced last month they will be launching a 12-hour television channel, but in 2007.

Mr. BERMAN. Right now they are just radio?

Mr. HARB. Correct.

Mr. BERMAN. They think there is something to what we have done.

Mr. HARB. But they gave themselves 2 years to launch that channel, we did it in 5½ months.

Mr. BERMAN. Explain a little bit; this issue the Chairman raised is interesting, the issue of bureaus versus linking up. You don't have a bureau in Cairo, but I heard you quote a pretty well-known newspaper, talking about what Alhurra has done in terms of both government spokesmen and opposition spokesmen.

Are these people like the Muslim Brotherhood or are they just sort of the officially ordained opposition going on Alhurra and praising them? If you did not have a bureau, how did that technically occur?

Mr. HARB. Having a bureau has two sides to it, the technical and the production facility inside that bureau and the editorial staff. If you look at our editorial staff, yes, we do have a bureau. But do we have an office where we have the American flag? No, we don't.

Mr. BERMAN. So you have correspondents?

Mr. HARB. We have three correspondents in Egypt. In addition to the three, we have two for radio before the Egyptian elections, and that is why it was reflected in the Arab press, and we got praise for our coverage of the Egyptian election. We dispatched from Washington two of our most talented Egyptians and did daily talk shows from Egypt, and it was the only platform for good people that Congressman Delahunt mentioned; they needed some platform. We were the platform for those people that are willing to debate the future of Egypt, and this is exactly what we have been doing this week.

Mr. BERMAN. I think there may be some misunderstanding.

When you talk about contracting out editing services, are you talking about the physical process of how to splice? Or are you talking about the decisions about what to edit?

Mr. HARB. When we talk about contracting, the editing is simply using the machine, but the producer and the editor, those are all Alhurra.

Mr. BERMAN. Alhurra is deciding, you are not contracting out, we are not going to show this. You are making that decision.

Mr. HARB. The editorial content of everything that goes on Alhurra is a decision made by Alhurra staff, sir.

Mr. BERMAN. All right.

Do we have a second panel on the issue of how you rate TV viewers in the Arab world? There is somebody who could speak to that on the second panel. My time is up.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. I apologize for having to step out, and rather than plow old ground, questions that I don't know have been asked or answers given, I know these questions haven't been asked unless Delahunt tried and left.

Mr. Tomlinson, let me address a few in your capacity on the Broadcasting Board of Governors with regard to radio and TV Marti. I am impressed by the numbers that we are seeing in the Middle East in terms of viewership and listenership, and I am wondering why, in Cuba, when we are broadcasting 90 miles from their shore, we have had the facilities going forever, and despite spending \$150 million so far on TV Marti, there is no evidence that any Cuban has really ever seen it?

And I understand the technical issues there, but we just keep doing it and doing it and doing it, and then with Radio Marti, we had some figures from several years ago which showed decent listenership when the program was actually broadcast here in Washington. Since it has moved to Miami, it has just fallen off the face of the earth, and there is virtually a fraction of its previous market share.

What are we doing there? And I know there have been some issues of cronyism and that supposedly has been fixed, but we haven't seen evidence that the numbers have changed that much, and I would submit it has more to do with content than anything else. What are we doing to improve that?

Mr. TOMLINSON. The real difference is, we have a marvelous situation in the Middle East. We have satellite dishes everywhere. It is very difficult to jam satellite television, and satellite television has become—Tom Friedman said it is not only the most important journalistic development in the Middle East, it is the most important political development. When you travel in the Middle East, there are satellite dishes everywhere you go. I stood in Afghanistan just a couple of months ago, and I looked at an apartment building and I saw dozens of satellite dishes there.

Anyone who has a satellite dish in Cuba is not long for this world. Jamming is what prevents us from being able to broadcast effectively in Cuba. The jamming makes listening difficult, but as you know, Congressman, we have a relatively new Radio Marti, it has done wonderful things to improve programming, but getting through that jamming is very difficult.

Mr. FLAKE. Let us move to Radio Marti where you don't have the jamming problem.

Mr. TOMLINSON. We do have radio jamming.

Mr. FLAKE. Not in Havana as much. The issue is not so much getting the signal; the issue is content and people just tuning out because it is not real news.

I have been to Cuba several times, so has Congressman Delahunt; we met with officials down in Miami. We have had government officials and others at think tanks, people at State Department, who have said before that we need to move the operation back to Washington where it can focus on news instead of—everybody knows that Castro is a thug. How many times do you have to say it on radio every day before people say, “I have heard that before, let’s move on.”

I just haven’t seen evidence that we are really moving the ball there.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Let me prepare something for the record which I will submit later. I will look into everything you have asked about here in terms of the news.

But I am under the impression that the news is quite professional, and that we have upgraded the quality of news and that we have wiped out the number of commentators who at some point a few years ago were dominating affairs.

Mr. FLAKE. I hope that is the case. Are there plans to survey again? When will we see the next survey as far as listenership?

Mr. TOMLINSON. Nielsen is not allowed to survey in Cuba, and the surveying we do there is most inexact. But I will get you the latest survey materials, which I think will demonstrate that we are better off than we were 3 or 4 years ago.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE KENNETH Y. TOMLINSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE JEFF FLAKE

The following information is provided pursuant to Chairman Ken Tomlinson’s offer to provide information for the record regarding Radio and TV Martí audiences.

TV Martí Viewership:

The most recent nationwide survey of TV Martí viewership, conducted by telephone from abroad in June 2005, showed 0.8 percent of respondents in randomly chosen phone households reporting having seen TV Martí in the past year, 0.2 percent in the past month, and 0.1 percent in the past week. Those who reported seeing TV Martí lived in Havana City and Province, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Ciego de Avila, Camagüey and Guantánamo provinces. This sample may under-represent actual viewers, as surveys in Cuba are subject to underreporting by TV Martí viewers who fear reprisals.

Since the C-130 Commando Solo began broadcasting in August of 2004, OCB has collected over 800 pieces of anecdotal evidence that people in Cuba are viewing TV Martí. Phone calls from viewers have been recorded and transcribed at the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB). The recorded evidence is very exact as the callers speak specifically about programs and what they enjoyed about them. Geographically, the callers range from the provinces of Pinar del Río, Havana, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus and Ciego de Avila. The new airborne transmission platform for TV Martí, funded by the FY ’06 budget, is designed to address further the intensive Cuban jamming.

The Department of State has also compiled anecdotal evidence from other sources and, according to the information that we have, State has collected close to 2000 responses. Independent journalists have also commented on TV Martí. Various newspapers and web pages such as the *Miami Herald*, the *Chicago Tribune*, CubaNet, and others have interviewed independent journalists and dissidents in Cuba and they confirm that TV Martí is being seen.

Radio Martí Listenership:

The June 2005 nationwide telephone survey of Cuba done for the BBG showed Radio Martí reaching 9 percent of respondents over the past year, 2.7 percent over

the past month and 1.2 percent over the past week. These estimates of past-year and past-week listenership are statistically unchanged since the December 2003 phone survey, though they suggest a small drop in past-month listening. Reliable comparisons with earlier in-country surveys (sampling different populations with different methods) are not possible.

Qualitative audience research done over the past 15 years for USIA and the BBG indicates that decreases in regular listening to Radio Martí has stemmed foremost from frustration with Cuban government signal interference. The Cuban government intensified interference with Radio Martí's medium wave (AM) signal since the early 1990's, and in the late 1990's acquired more effective shortwave jamming equipment from China. Focus groups conducted for the BBG with recent arrivals from Cuba to South Florida suggest that frustration with the difficulties of tuning in is a factor in any decline in frequent listening.

Radio Martí Content:

On April 5, 2004, OCB implemented the BBG directive of February 11, 2004, to restructure the Radio Martí format into an all news and information service. Though they almost universally pointed to frustration with signal interference, recently-arrived Cubans participating in BBG-sponsored focus groups have said that Radio Martí remains a valued resource for objective news and information during major events. Most participants who have noted changes in Radio Martí's news programming point to improvement in recent years.

In monitoring panel studies conducted in July 2004 and May 2005, recently-arrived Cubans who provided detailed evaluations of Radio Martí programs rated their overall journalistic quality as "good to excellent" (an average rating of 3.4 on a 1-4 scale), and U.S.-based experts rated that quality as "good" (an average rating of 2.9).

Mr. FLAKE. I appreciate the work you are doing.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Schiff.

Mr. SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for coming to testify.

Mr. Kleinman, we appreciate you coming here from L.A. As a Los Angelian, I can understand why you want to go back.

To you, Mr. Harb, and your staff, I appreciate the work that you are doing, often at great personal risk, particularly for your correspondents and staff outside of the country and maybe for yourself personally. I wouldn't be surprised if many of the staff at Alhurra had been threatened personally or received death threats.

We know this is not your typical broadcasting operation, and I am sure that some of the criticisms that have been leveled are a function of the quickness with which you had to start up. And it probably is surprising to you that while you could anticipate a lot of attacks and criticism from within the Arab world, particularly from your competitors, you probably did not expect quite so many arrows coming from within DC, as opposed to from outside the country. And I think for that reason, as Mr. Berman points out, the IG report will be useful in sorting out what are just competitive rivalries or personality disputes as to whether there is any other more substantive issue.

I had a couple of different disparate questions, and I think that you have been able to answer some of them already, and I think part of the misperception we have had here is on the issue of to what degree you are utilizing what I thought was more or less a wire service in the Middle East and the whole bureau issue.

Because I think the impression that some of us had was that you didn't have personnel of your own outside the country and that you were relying on other news sources that might have you second or third in line, but not first in line. And part of that perception might be some of the critiques that we have heard about the length of

time which elapses between an event, the bombing and the coverage, that might also have been an earlier issue in Alhurra rather than a current issue in Alhurra.

But if I understand correctly, you have your own staff throughout the Middle East, not in every country but in several. You don't have your own production facilities in every country; and I am sure if we gave you the money to do it, you would be happy to do it. I am not sure we will give you the money, but—Mr. Flake might support relocation of a bureau or two.

I want to ask you a couple of things. One is, it sounds like the coverage that you did in Egypt was very successful, in part because it was unique in that you were giving a platform for a debate over Egyptian elections, which Egypt would not allow in another forum. I guess I have a couple questions with respect to that.

One, did your competitors offer the same thing, and if they didn't, why didn't they? Did Aljazeera have competitive viewpoints within Egypt expressed during that election?

And second, if this is a niche, isn't this a great one to really try to develop and exploit in other countries? If what you can offer to people will get Arab audiences to tune in, it is something to hear something other than their own state-run message—not ever, necessarily, the American message, but hear their domestic internal debate. That seems to me something you could offer that really would distinguish yourself from your competitors in the region and get people tuning in.

So I am interested to see whether that was happening with competitors, and if not, why not, and if you see this as an opportunity elsewhere.

Then I am interested also in the point I made in the beginning about satellite, why you can't get on the radio in various countries and whether our Government has tried to apply pressure to open up the radio waves, even in friends like Egypt.

Mr. HARB. Egypt was a classic example where if you plan ahead of time and you have a strategy, it works. It is science.

There is something unique about the Alhurra channel. Most of the Arabic television channels, the Pan-Arab ones, are funded by Arab governments, not to make money out of them. When there is an inter-Arab dispute, they are a part of the exchange and they start attacking each other, so there is always a chance that coverage of a certain event is subject to the bilateral relations between the owner, those who are funding the channel, and the event where that is taking place.

I will give you an example, why did Aljazeera not do as well as we did in Egypt? Because they made a deal with the Egyptian President. We are above all the other Arab disputes.

Aljazeera is funded by Qatar. Al-Arabiya is funded by the Saudis. When there is a foreign policy dispute, you see them attacking one another. We are above that and that is something that is working for us. People understand that we are above all the disputes among Arab nations and all the local disputes; and this is a niche, I believe, as you outline, that is working for Alhurra, and we are going to capitalize on that.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Talk about those town hall meetings.

Mr. HARB. Another example, we said from day one we are commercial free. We are not going to share revenues from the indigenous media and are not there to replace the indigenous media. What we are trying to accomplish is to make the Arab media more honest in their reporting. If we can establish that, that is a great plus—also, if we can affect the debate that takes place there or be part of the agenda-setting.

I will give you an example. Last summer we decided to do a series of town hall meetings in Damascus, live. We set conditions; we only go there if you allow us to do our broadcast live and we can allow reformists to appear on the channel.

It was too good to be true. I was watching the live broadcast from a square in Damascus, and a Syrian reformer said, “Syria, we don’t have audiovisual law, we have a terrorist law,” and I couldn’t believe that was in Damascus.

The next day our producer called me and said, “Things are not the same today.” I said, “What?” He said, “All the production houses are shutting down on us and maybe we are not welcome anymore.”

So we left. We did one show. A week later one of our competitors tried to do exactly the same.

This is an example of how we are affecting the behavior of the Arab media. They failed to do the same, because they impose on them that they have to tape the shows ahead of time. And people in the Middle East are particularly sophisticated, they know propaganda, they know when you are doing a free broadcast or not.

Again, these are the kinds of shows and the kind of strategy that, if we amplify on Alhurra, we will have more of an audience and we will gain more credibility among those who believe in our mission, which is freedom and democracy.

Mr. SCHIFF. Can you tell us, the bombings in Jordan, how quickly were you able to get on the scene? And if you have been able to compare yet—and maybe there hasn’t been time—how has the Alhurra coverage of what happened in Jordan differed from the coverage of your competitors?

Mr. HARB. We came a long way since we first established Alhurra, and again, Alhurra was not funded enough to be an all-news channel. We are a news and information channel; however, we have the flexibility if there is major breaking news to become an all-news channel. And yesterday was a clear example.

We were covering another breaking news event, which was the Egyptian elections, and we went with nonstop coverage, and then the bombing in Amman. We extended coverage and went nonstop until we extended at least 4, 5 hours from when we usually go to sleep in Washington.

So I wouldn’t say we were the first report on the breaking news, because we did not have our satellite link there like our competitors do; and this is something we have requested over and over. We need to have our own trucks in Arab cities, so if there is breaking news, we can send that truck and start broadcasting live.

Mr. SCHIFF. This is one of the issues I really wanted to get at; how long did it take you to get on the scene in Jordan? And aren’t you going to be losing a big potential share of your viewership if

the viewers know they can turn on Aljazeera and instantly get footage of what took place, and that you won't have it for some time?

Mr. HARB. That is a major challenge for Alhurra, and we hope we can overcome it by getting more funding so we can act like a breaking news channel. Right now, maybe the first 5, 10 minutes people would not tune in to us, but within 10 minutes, we can offer another perspective on what is going on, and we usually do well in breaking news operations.

We dispatch all our resources, our guests, from here, our correspondents from around the world. But key to any breaking news coverage is having the technical capability to broadcast live from the scene. It shows in all the research that we do and all the focus groups we have attended. If you have a correspondent live on the scene where the event took place, where the bombing took place, it adds to your credibility. We try to do that as much as possible, but we have requested more funding in order to do a better job on this.

Mr. TOMLINSON. Tom Wolfe said in *The Right Stuff*, "No bucks, no Buck Rogers. Give us the money, we'll give you Buck Rogers."

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you, Mr. Tomlinson. Thank you, Mr. Schiff.

We have a second panel. Just in summary or in closing, let me suggest one other item that we did not touch on and I mentioned in my opening remarks. Prior to the testimony here today, Karen Hughes was here suggesting that the Administration had such a high priority in its communication strategy.

And, Mr. Tomlinson, you may correct me, there is a vacancy on the Board of Governors; is that correct?

Mr. TOMLINSON. There is a vacancy.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. How long has that vacancy been there?

Mr. TOMLINSON. About a year.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. So you have a nine-person Board of Governors, and you have had a vacancy, so there have been only eight people there as a Board of Governors for the last year?

Mr. TOMLINSON. Seven plus the representative at the State Department.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If this hearing does anything, let us make sure that we put on notice to the Administration that ignoring its responsibilities to make sure that the boards of governors of operations like your own and other, I will say, oversight panels are fully manned and are fully, shall I say, appointed. We don't take that lightly.

I would give all of you high marks today, and we appreciate you coming here. I do not give the Administration high marks for permitting a position like this on the Board of Governors to remain vacant for as long as it has been vacant, because I know that to do your job, Mr. Tomlinson, it depends on the Administration above you doing their jobs and making sure those vacancies are filled with people who reflect the current Administration's ideas.

So while I give you folks high marks, I am sorry that I am going to have to call the Administration to task for something they haven't done.

But we appreciate you being here today, and thank you. And we will now have our second panel. By the way, Mr. Harb, as we are

changing, I notice you said that oil prices are going up. Was that report from last week or today?

Mr. HARB. I am calling for less dependency on media outlets funded by oil revenues.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

I would like to introduce Mr. Andrew Kohut, President of the Pew Research Center. He is also Director of the Pew Research Center for People and the Press and Pew Global Attitudes Project. Mr. Kohut served as President of the National Council on Public Polls in 2000 and 2001. He was also the President of the American Association of Public Opinion Research from 1994 to 1995. He served as Director for Surveys for the Times Mirror Center from 1990 to 1992 and was named its Director in 1993.

Mr. Kohut has been the recipient of many awards, most recently the 2005 American Association of Public Opinion Research's highest honor, the Award for Exceptionally Distinguished Achievement.

Mr. Kohut, I thank you very much for being with us here today.

We also have Mr. Jim Phillips of The Heritage Foundation, and unfortunately, Ms. Helle Dale was not able to be with us today, but he will be presenting her testimony.

I would ask, if possible, for you to summarize your points into a 5-minute summary, and then we can get on with some questions and exchange here.

Mr. Kohut.

STATEMENT OF MR. ANDREW KOHUT, DIRECTOR, PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS

Mr. KOHUT. As the epilogue to these hearings, I welcome the opportunity to help the Committee better understand the image of America in the Middle East and in the Muslim world. I am not here to make recommendations about foreign policy or communication strategies, but to give you a sense of what we are up against.

Since 2002, we have conducted in the Global Attitudes Project 90,000 interviews in 51 countries, including many Arab countries and many Muslim nations. Sadly, the polling chronicles the rise of anti-Americanism all around the world. Moreover, in every wave of the surveys, opinions of the United States are generally much worse in Arab countries and in Muslim countries than they are anywhere else.

Our most recent survey was conducted this spring in 17 countries. The headline of the first report was that while the image of the United States was improved a little bit, it was still mostly negative all around the world. The second report said that Islamic extremism was of common concern to both Muslim publics and to Western publics, and that was certainly good news.

Given the topic of this hearing about Alhurra, I am going to restrict my remarks to what we found about Jordan and Lebanon and Morocco, but I would also like to bring in some of our findings with regard to Pakistan and Turkey, given their importance.

In all of these countries we found some improvement in opinions about the United States since 2003, when anger was at a high point following the invasion of Iraq. But still we found very small percentages of people in these countries holding good opinions of the United States. The number holding favorable views of the

United States rose in Jordan to 21 percent, rose in Pakistan to 23 percent, and rose in Turkey to 23 percent. Indeed, these were small numbers, but in earlier surveys they were much lower than that.

In Lebanon, we found 42 percent have a good opinion of America, but that total masked a giant difference between the Muslims, among whom 22 percent had a favorable view of us; and the Christians, among whom 72 percent had a favorable view of us. The one piece of very good news was in Morocco, where we saw a rebounding of the American image from 27 percent the year before to 49 percent. Still that favorability rating wasn't up near 77 percent, where we were in 1999 before the image of the United States started to fall all around the world.

Now, I can't tell you about opinions in Palestine or Egypt or Kuwait. We haven't revisited those countries, but except for Kuwait, in all of the Arab countries we have been in, we have found a lot of antagonism toward the United States and toward the American people as well.

Now the primary sources of anti-Americanism are not values. This is not an argument about values and culture, it has to do with American policies, and that is a very important thing to understand. The ongoing conflict in Iraq continues to fuel anti-Americanism, the war on terrorism is perceived negatively in the region, and the perception that the United States acts unilaterally in foreign policy is a big negative not only in the Mideast, but all around the world.

But in the Middle East, the 800-pound gorilla is opinions about how the United States deals with the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, seen as overwhelmingly unfair in all Muslim countries. Even in Kuwait it is seen as unfair.

I would like to emphasize some of the good news from the most recent surveys. While the image of the United States remains mostly negative, we have also observed some positive changes. We have seen support for terrorism decline somewhat over the past 3 years. The percentage of people saying that a suicide bombing that targets civilians is justifiable has declined in Lebanon, Pakistan, and Morocco. Ironically, the one country where we didn't see a decline in belief that suicide bombing was justifiable was Jordan.

Similarly, confidence in Osama bin Laden in all of these countries, or many of these countries, declined somewhat in Morocco from 49 to 26 percent. Again, the outlier is Jordan, where, if anything, there was a little more confidence in Osama bin Laden this year than in years past.

Now, while there has been some progress in most of these countries, we still have a long way to go, and there are still substantial numbers of people who think that killing—through suicide bombings and other means, Americans and other Westerners in Iraq—is justifiable and reasonable.

Another positive development, trying to stay on the positive, is that we have potential common cause in the Muslim world on Islamic extremism. It is seen as a threat to one's own country in Morocco, Pakistan, and Turkey. Again, the only exception to this was, oddly enough—ironically, given what happened yesterday—in Jordan, where only 10 percent of the people that we interviewed said that they had a concern about Islamic extremism.

A longer-term, encouraging finding in all of our surveys that is worth mentioning is that most Muslim publics express a great desire for democracy. Majorities of Arab publics consistently say in every poll we have taken that they think Western-style democracy can work in their countries. And it is not just paying lip service to the idea; they tell us that they want a free press, they want freedom of expression, a fair judiciary, they want multiparty systems; they tell us also that they don't have them.

One of the good things in this survey is that many of the people that we interviewed this year said they thought the United States was trying to encourage democracy in their countries, a very difficult thing to say in places where the United States is not well liked. So that message is getting through.

To sum up, there is considerable antipathy toward the United States. United States favorability is relatively low, and anti-Americanism is driven by negative perceptions of our policies, and that is a very important consideration. However, there is some abatement of the anger that we found right after the invasion of Iraq, and we do see that in many of these places support for terrorism is waning, particularly in countries like Morocco, Indonesia and other places that have had their own taste of terrorist incidents within their countries.

I think, while this represents some progress, it will be difficult to bring about a major improvement in America's image unless we can demonstrate to our critics in these countries that they are wrong about American intentions and policies. In this regard, actions always speak louder than words, and that was certainly the lesson in Indonesia where the image of America rebounded extraordinarily in response to tsunami aid.

I think that, short of major policy initiatives, there appear to be limits on how much U.S. communication efforts can achieve. It is my counsel to you to be modest in your expectations about the impact of the important work of Alhurra. Given the magnitude of negative attitudes in the Muslim world, such efforts—and public diplomacy more broadly—are going to be making the best of a bad situation, correcting misinformation and softening hostility.

There are likely to be only small changes for the foreseeable future. In the end, it is only reaction to major policies that can significantly move the needle in the Mideast and in Muslim countries. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kohut follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. ANDREW KOHUT, DIRECTOR, PEW RESEARCH CENTER
FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS

Thank you for the opportunity to help this committee understand better how the United States is perceived in the Arab and Muslim worlds. I am not here to make recommendations regarding foreign policy or communication strategies, but to provide information about the nature of the problem facing the U.S. in this important part of the world.

Since its inception in 2002, the Pew Global Attitudes Project has surveyed more than 90,000 people in 50 nations, including many Arab and majority Muslim countries. Our most recent 17-nation survey conducted this past spring led to two reports, "U.S. Image Up Slightly, But Still Negative" and "Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics," that examined attitudes towards the U.S., as well as a host of other issues. The survey included six majority Muslim countries: Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, and Turkey. Given that the topic of this hearing is Alhurra, this report focuses on our recent findings in

the Arab countries of Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco, but also addresses findings from the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Turkey.

As our surveys underscore, the U.S. continues to face enormous challenges regarding its public image in Arab and Muslim countries. Anti-Americanism in the region is driven largely by aversion to U.S. policies, such as the war in Iraq, the war on terrorism, and U.S. support for Israel, in addition to the general perception that the U.S. fails to consider the interests of countries in the region when it acts in the international arena. At the same time, however, our findings highlight areas of improvement. U.S. favorability ratings have increased in some countries, and there are signs that support for terrorism is waning. Moreover, there is strong evidence suggesting that Arab and Muslim publics overwhelmingly desire democracy for their countries.

U.S. Image Still Poor in the Middle East

Pew Global Attitudes surveys of 50 nations in 2002 and 2003 found that the U.S. was less popular in the Middle East than in any other part of the world. Today the U.S. remains largely disliked in the region, although America's favorability rating has increased significantly in Lebanon, Jordan, and Morocco. Indeed, more Moroccans now hold a positive view of the U.S. (49%) than a negative one (44%). Still, in the other four countries, solid majorities give the U.S. a negative rating. And the relatively high U.S. favorability rating in Lebanon is due largely to the country's Christian minority. Among Lebanese Muslims, just 22% have a favorable opinion of the U.S.

Favorable Opinion of the U.S.					
	'99/00	2002	2003	2004	2005
	%	%	%	%	%
Lebanon	--	35	27	--	42
Jordan	--	25	1	5	21
Morocco	77	--	27	27	49
Pakistan	23	10	13	21	23
Turkey	52	30	15	30	23

1999/2000 trends from Office of Research, U.S. Dept. of State.

One hopeful sign for the U.S. is that young people tend to view America somewhat more positively than do their elders. In each of these five countries, those under age 35 give the U.S. a higher favorable rating than do those 35 and older, and the gap is especially large in Turkey (29% favorable among 18–34 year-olds, 17% among those over 35) and Pakistan (28% among 18–34 year-olds, 17% among older Pakistanis).

Also, a modest gender gap is seen in opinions of America. While women are less likely to offer an opinion of the U.S. than are men, when they do they generally have a somewhat more positive opinion. Pakistan has the largest gender gap, with 28% of women and 17% of men saying they have a favorable opinion of the U.S. The exception to this pattern is Jordan, where opinions of the U.S. are equally negative among both men and women.

Sources of Anti-Americanism

Over time, our surveys have found that anti-Americanism around the world is driven first and foremost by opposition to U.S. foreign policy. Four policies are particularly relevant to countries in the region. First, the ongoing conflict in Iraq continues to fuel anti-American sentiments. America's global popularity plummeted at the start of military action in Iraq, and the U.S. presence there remains widely unpopular. Strong majorities in all five nations where we surveyed believe their country's decision not to use force in the Iraqi conflict was the right one. Majorities also think the war has made the world a more dangerous place.



Second, the war on terror is perceived negatively in the region; majorities in all five countries oppose U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism. The 2002 Global Attitudes survey found that the war on terror drew more opposition from Arab and other Muslim-majority countries than from any other part of the globe, and although the degree of opposition in specific countries has fluctuated somewhat over time, the over-

all picture is clear: the U.S. has not won the battle for Muslim public opinion on this important issue.

Third, anti-Americanism is driven by the perception that America acts unilaterally on the world stage. Majorities or pluralities in each of these countries say that in making foreign policy decisions, the U.S. pays either “not too much” or “not much at all” attention to their country’s interests. In Lebanon, there has been some progress on this question—the U.S. is seen as less unilateralist than it was two years ago. Nonetheless, nearly six-in-ten Lebanese still feel the U.S. does not take their interests into account.

Finally, perceptions of U.S. policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict feed anti-Americanism. A 2003 Pew Global Attitudes poll found that enormous majorities in Arab and Muslim countries (at least 90% in Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Morocco, and Lebanon) believed the U.S. favors Israel too much. Although our most recent survey did not ask this same question, it did find strongly negative views towards Jews in the Arab world. For example, no respondents in either Lebanon or Jordan had a favorable view of Jews (on the other hand, 91% of Lebanese and 58% of Jordanians had a favorable view of Christians).

Growing Opposition to Terrorism

Despite the continuing unpopularity of the U.S.-led fight against terrorism, there is growing evidence that support for terrorism is waning among Muslim publics. Support for violence against civilians in the defense of Islam has declined significantly in several countries, including a dramatic 34 point drop in Lebanon since 2002. There have also been smaller, but still important, decreases in Morocco and Pakistan. Meanwhile, in Turkey, support for terrorist acts has remained at a relatively low level. On the other hand, Jordan, where support has risen by 14 points, is an exception to the overall pattern.

Declining Support for Terrorism				
<i>Violence is often or sometimes justified</i>				
	2002	2004	2005	
	%	%	%	
Jordan	43	--	57	
Lebanon	73	--	39	
Morocco	--	40	13	
Pakistan	33	41	25	
Turkey	13	15	14	
<i>Suicide attacks in Iraq justifiable</i>				
	2004	2005		
Jordan	70	49		
Lebanon	--	49		
Morocco	66	56		
Pakistan	46	29		
Turkey	31	24		
Figures based on Muslim respondents only.				

Muslim publics are somewhat more inclined to support suicide bombings when carried out against Americans and other Westerners in Iraq, although here, too, the proportions considering such actions justifiable have declined over the last year. Only in Morocco does a majority still find such bombings justifiable, although that percentage is down substantially from March 2004. In both Jordan and Lebanon, nearly half of Muslims support suicide bombings against Westerners in Iraq, but in Jordan support has declined from 70% a year ago. In Turkey and Pakistan, fewer than three-in-ten now say suicide attacks can be justified. In Morocco, Pakistan and Turkey, men are significantly more likely than women to find such actions justifiable.

Confidence in bin Laden as World Leader			
	A lot or some		
	2003	2005	Diff.
	%	%	
Jordan	55	60	+5
Lebanon	14	2	-12
Morocco	49	26	-23
Pakistan	45	51	+6
Turkey	15	7	-8

Another sign that support for terrorism may be fading is that opinions of Osama bin Laden have turned more negative over the last two years in Morocco, Lebanon, and Turkey. In Morocco, the decline has been particularly steep—in 2003 roughly half of Moroccans expressed confidence in bin Laden to do the right thing in world affairs; today, about one-in-four hold this view. Troublingly, however, majorities in Jordan and Pakistan still have some or a lot of confidence in bin Laden, and support for the Al Qaeda leader has actually grown in these two countries.

Support for terrorism may be declining in part because Arab and Muslim publics see Islamic extremism as a threat to their own country. This is especially true in Morocco, Pakistan, and Turkey, as well as among Lebanese Christians. In contrast, relatively few Jordanians or Lebanese Muslims are concerned about domestic extremism.

Islamic Extremism a Threat to Your Country?			
	Yes*	No	DK
	%	%	%
Jordan	10	87	3=100
Lebanon	26	66	8=100
Christians	53	42	5=100
Muslims	4	85	11=100
Morocco	73	18	9=100
Pakistan	52	27	21=100
Turkey	47	34	19=100

* 'Yes' is very or fairly great threat and
'No' is not too great or no threat at all.

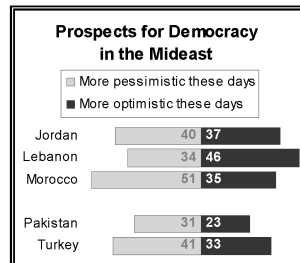
These concerns about extremism do not imply, however, that citizens in the region reject a role for Islam in politics. In each of these countries except Jordan, majorities or pluralities see Islam playing a larger part in politics than it did a few years ago, and those who see Islam taking a bigger role tend to view this as a good development, although Turks, with their strong tradition of secularism, are more divided on this issue.

Muslim Publics Favor Democracy

Since the first Pew Global Attitudes Survey in 2002, we have consistently found broad support for democracy among predominantly Muslim publics. And on our most recent survey, overwhelming majorities of Jordanians, Lebanese, and Moroccans say democracy is not just a Western way of governance, and that it can work in their countries. Although there is less agreement on this in Pakistan and Turkey, pluralities there still believe democracy can work in those countries. Moreover, our 2002 survey found widespread support in the region for specific features of a democratic system, such as the right to criticize the government; honest, multiparty elections; a fair judiciary; and a free, independent media.

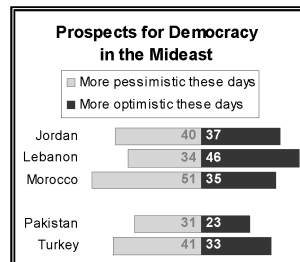
Democracy Not Just a Western Way			
Democracy can work here			
	2002	2003	2005
	%	%	%
Jordan	63	69	80
Lebanon	75	71	83
Morocco	—	64	83
Pakistan	44	57	43
Turkey	43	50	48

People are divided, however, over the future of democracy in the Middle East. A plurality of Lebanese (46%)—and a majority of the country's Christians (59%)—are optimistic that the Middle East will become more democratic. Meanwhile, Jordanians are divided between those who are becoming more optimistic and pessimistic, while the Turks, Pakistanis, and Moroccans lean toward pessimism (although 34% of Pakistanis offer no opinion).



Among those expressing optimism, a 55% majority in Pakistan gives at least partial credit to U.S. policies for its more hopeful view, as do nearly half of Jordanian and Lebanese optimists. But in both Morocco and Turkey, 51% of optimists give no credit to the U.S. Among pessimists, large majorities (ranging as high as 75% in Lebanon, 83% in Turkey to an astounding 98% in Jordan) lay the blame for their lack of optimism at least partly on U.S. policies.

Despite widespread distrust of America among Arabs and Muslims, many do believe the U.S. wants to see countries in the region move toward democracy. Clear majorities in Morocco and Lebanon believe the U.S. is backing democracy in their countries. But Jordanians and Pakistanis are nearly evenly split over whether America favors democracy in their nations (the question was not asked in Turkey). Across all four countries, those who believe the U.S. backs democracy are considerably more likely to have a favorable view of America.



Summary: Continuing Challenges, But Promising Signs As Well

There remains considerable antipathy toward the U.S. in Arab and Muslim countries. U.S. favorability is relatively low, and anti-Americanism is driven by negative perceptions of, and opposition to, U.S. foreign policies, such as the war in Iraq, the war on terror, U.S. support for Israel, and U.S. unilateralism.

At the same time, however, there are hopeful signs. There has already been some progress in Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco, and some population groups, including young people and women, are more favorably disposed toward the U.S. than others. Moreover, support for terrorism and terrorist leaders is declining among many in the region. And finally, there is strong evidence that citizens throughout the region aspire to democratic governance.

While this represents some progress, it will be difficult to bring about a major improvement in America's image unless we can demonstrate to our critics in the Muslim world that they are wrong about our intentions and policies. And in this regard, actions will always speak louder than words. That certainly was the lesson in Indonesia, where the image of America rebounded in response to our Tsunami aid efforts.

Short of major policy initiatives, there appear to be limits on how much U.S. communication efforts in the region can achieve. Given the magnitude of negative attitudes in the Muslim world, such efforts will be mostly defensive, making the best of a bad situation—correcting misinformation, softening hostility by emphasizing the well-regarded aspects of America. These are likely to bring about only marginal changes in America's image. In the end, it is only reaction to major policies that can significantly move the needle.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much for that testimony.

And, Mr. Phillips, you may proceed. I hope you can, as I say, boil it down to 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES PHILLIPS, RESEARCH FELLOW,
MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS, ON BEHALF OF MS. HELLE C.
DALE, DIRECTOR, ALLISON CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY
STUDIES, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I just wanted to note I am here as a last-minute replacement for my boss, Helle Dale, who unfortunately couldn't make it because of the change in the hearing time.

In my testimony, I would like to address the need for reform, broad reform, in international broadcasting in reference to Alhurra and the BBG, and also suggestions for broader organizational changes as well as a need for coherence and clarity in the U.S. foreign broadcasting mission.

Alhurra is an important initiative in responding to previous shortcomings in broadcasting to the Middle East. Because it is operated as a nonprofit corporation, the idea was to avoid heavy paperwork and the long processes characterizing international broadcasting bureaucracy previously.

Ever since the end of the Cold War, U.S. public diplomacy has declined and there has been no true effort to redefine it. Alhurra and other new international broadcasters have to develop under a different legal framework and work within a fragmented organizational structure. The problem is not merely a lack of cohesion between the different entities, but also the absence of a general, well-defined strategy regarding what our international broadcasting tries to achieve.

On the one hand, I think journalists see their mission as providing accurate and objective news; at the same time, their mission is also more broadly to discuss U.S. policy and improve America's image abroad. These two functions do not necessarily have to contradict each other, that is, if the public diplomacy mission and the victory in the war of ideas are defined as bringing necessary information, free flow of ideas and objective coverage of world events to people who otherwise have no access to it. Accordingly, if the inter-

national broadcasters are to be seen primarily as news agencies, they should be given every possible means to succeed in the highly competitive media environment.

Still, we should keep in mind that such a narrow definition of winning the hearts and minds risks reducing U.S. international broadcasting to the status of any other news agency, and that it needs to appeal to the audience and seek scoops. Another alternative would be to think about how to communicate and have a dialogue with a foreign audience.

Rethinking the mission goes beyond Alhurra and critically reconsidering the confusing organizational structure of public diplomacy which resulted from the merge of USAID and the State Department. The new BBG structure presents opportunities for conflict of interest, so sitting board members serve part-time and may continue as executives in their real-life businesses. While that brings welcome expertise to the board, there is little to keep members from directly hiring business associates to work in subordinate agencies. That lack of a clear, overall strategy is also reflected in the lack of coordination and coherence between different agencies under the BBG.

Another important issue that many of the international broadcasters face is the difficulty of professional recruitment, where language credentials many times come before journalistic experience.

So what changes should be made? Let me just outline a thumbnail sketch of three. One is an organizational global approach. We should restore the public diplomacy's integral reporting channels and budgets to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

And, secondly, a strategic approach in regards to the international broadcasting. We need to recognize that public diplomacy is a long-term effort. Congress should give foreign broadcasting a new, more flexible personnel system so it can expand and contract more easily, saving money and adapting to new technologies. Eventually, all broadcasting operations should be consolidated under one roof with services tailored by channel and content to priority countries and regions.

Finally, let me just sum up by saying that it is essential, while thinking of decisions of content and programming, to remember that each market is different and requires a different strategy. For instance, there is a difference between a more pro-American/Iranian population and the Arab street that is more negative in many countries toward the United States.

Alhurra plays an important role as an example. It was meant to target a very diverse Arab world where each country has a different relationship, both historically and currently, with the U.S. If Alhurra is only to serve as a news agency, the same objective news content could be sent to all countries involved, but if we are trying to have programs that want to inspire critical thinking within those countries, then there should be an effort to target regional differences and languages and cultures.

Let me just stop there.

[The prepared statement Ms. Helle Dale follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. HELLE C. DALE, DIRECTOR, ALLISON CENTER FOR
FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for inviting me to speak today on the Broadcasting Board of Governors and Al-Hurra Television. I must begin my testimony with the disclaimer that the following statements are my personal views and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Heritage Foundation.

The question before us today is not only one of Al-Hurra's performance and role in improving the image of the United States in the Arab World. Inevitably, our discussion reveals the urgent necessity of a larger debate regarding where U.S. broadcasting efforts in the Middle East are heading.

The events of September 11 woke us up to the reality of growing anti-Americanism. The War on Terror and the Administration's efforts to win "hearts and minds" include spreading our ideas of freedom and democracy to people deprived of them. Our public diplomacy should promote U.S. interests and security through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics, as well as broadening dialogue between American institutions and their counterparts abroad.

The work of the Broadcasting Board of Governors and Al-Hurra has been an important step in that direction. It is essential we discuss their activities, as well as the lessons learnt, in order to progress and be as efficient as possible.

In my testimony I will address 1) The need for reform of US international broadcasting in reference to Al-Hurra and BBG, 2) Suggestions for broader organizational changes as well as the need for coherence and clarity of the US foreign broadcasting mission, programming and content.

Al-Hurra was an important initiative in responding to previous shortcomings of broadcasting towards Middle East. Because it is operated by a non-profit corporation, the idea was to avoid the heavy paper work and long processes characterizing international broadcasting bureaucracy. The 24/7 satellite TV was meant to engage in a war of ideas and combat distorted information with greater flexibility, intensity and competitiveness. But despite positive intentions and deeds, Al-Hurra shares certain problematic aspects with other U.S. foreign broadcasting efforts, which we need to deal with urgently.

The mission needs to be defined

Ever since the end of the Cold War, U.S. public diplomacy has declined, and there has been no true effort to redefine it. Al-Hurra and other new international broadcasters have developed under different legal frameworks and work within a fragmented organizational structure. The problem is not merely a lack of cohesion between the different entities, but also the absence of a general, well-defined strategy regarding what our international broadcasting tries to achieve. Because there is little clarity and agreement on goals, the perception of what the broadcasters' role should be can differ between the broadcasting staff and the government that funds them.

On one hand, journalists prefer to see their mission as providing accurate and objective news. At the same time as they are asked by the International Broadcasting Act, to follow professional journalistic standards, their mission is also more broadly to discuss U.S. policy and improve America's image abroad.

These two functions do not necessarily have to contradict each other. That is, if the public diplomacy mission and victory in the war of ideas are defined as bringing necessary information and objective coverage of world events to people who would otherwise have no access to it.

Accordingly, if the international broadcasters are to be seen primarily as news agencies, they should be given every possible means to succeed in a highly competitive media environment, especially in the Arab world where Al-Hurra competes with more than 100 other satellite TV channels. In that case, a change in the Smith-Mundt Act would be a wise decision to help build support domestically for the international broadcasters constrained by it. Simultaneously broadcasting to a domestic audience could imply more incentives for the public opinion to support and understand their mission. Furthermore, it could lead to an increase in program quality by appealing to experts or other possible guests who would otherwise not see the significance in appearing in front of a foreign audience where they are often unknown.

Still, we should keep in mind that such a narrow definition of "winning hearts and minds" risks reducing U.S. international broadcasting to the status of any other news agency that needs, to a certain degree, to appeal to its audience and seek "scoops" in order to survive. Another alternative would be to think about how to communicate, or seek a dialogue and a base of understanding with the foreign audience we are trying to reach.

Problems due to organization and lack of oversight inherent in the system

Rethinking the mission involves going beyond Al-Hurra and critically reconsidering the confusing organizational structure of U.S. public diplomacy. This results from changes made after the merger of USIA with the State Department. USIA's area offices were consolidated into State's geographic bureaus and lost their independent budgets and reporting channels. The Under Secretariat of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs was created as an advisory position with no significant budget and no authority over public diplomacy (PD) personnel.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors was strengthened by the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act. The new BBG structure presents opportunities for conflict of interest. Sitting board members serve part-time and may continue as executives in their real-life businesses. While that brings welcome expertise to the Board, there is little to keep members from directly hiring business associates to work in subordinate agencies.

The above-mentioned lack of a clear overall strategy is also reflected in a lack of coordination and coherence between different agencies under BBG that target the same foreign audience. This can lead to duplicative efforts and waste of money. One example is the VOA Persian service and Radio Farda, who have no coordination of goal, message or strategy in regards of its audience. Also, these services suffer from a lack of external oversight. In addition to no clear directives from BBG, no continuous mechanisms of evaluation and feedback have been detrimental to international broadcasting. A good option would be a frequent use of external contracted evaluators.

Another issue that many of the international broadcasters face is the difficulties of professional recruitment, where language credentials many times comes before journalistic experience.

What changes need to be done?

We cannot engage in a complete reorganization of international broadcasting as this would cause needless anxiety and waste. Furthermore, the improvements already achieved would be lost. But much can still be done. We could undertake:

1) Organizational global approach

We should restore public diplomacy's integral reporting channels and budgets to the office of the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

2) Strategic approach in regards of international broadcasting

We need to recognize that public diplomacy is a long-term effort.

Congress should give foreign broadcasting a new, more flexible personnel system so it can expand and contract more easily, saving money that could be better spent on new technology.

Eventually, all broadcast operations should be consolidated under one roof with services tailored by channel and content to priority countries and regions.

We are also witnessing a change in the conduct of international broadcasting, brought to our attention more strongly with Radio Sawa and, to some extent, Al-Hurra. The emphasis is being put on reaching a broad young audience, instead of targeting public opinion leaders and intellectuals. Similar efforts have been undertaken by other BBG broadcasters such as Radio Farda, which has carried out the same mixture of western and domestic entertainment and news. What needs to be considered here is, once again, a clarification of a long-term strategy. If the bigger aim is to enlighten an audience, with no historical experience of democracy, about its values and functioning, the entertainment aspect would, to a lesser degree, serve this purpose. Nonetheless, for certain audiences, like Iran where entertainment is forbidden, this would give the population access to an asset available in a free society.

In the spirit of initiating a dialogue with the foreign audience, an alternative, which would require already mentioned changes in the Smith-Mundt Act would be to broadcast certain programs to the American audience. This sign of cultural exchange would be a message to the foreign audience that the dialogue is as much about us trying to understand them.

It is essential, while thinking of decisions of content and programming, to remember that each market is different and requires a certain strategy. For instance, there is a difference between a more pro-American Iranian population and the Arab street that is more negative to U.S. The concept of Al-Hurra plays an important role as an example. Al-Hurra was meant to target a very diverse Arab world, where each country has a different relationship (both historical and current) with the United States. If Al-Hurra is only to serve as a news agency, the same objective news content could be sent to all countries involved. But by having programs that want to

inspire critical thinking, it must adapt to regional differences in language and culture.

A broader view of Public Diplomacy

Today, we have mainly focused on broadcasting efforts, which seek to increase a foreign audience's understanding of the United States and the values of freedom on which the United States is founded. Still, international broadcasting should not be the only channel used to influence foreign publics. I would like to briefly mention the importance of supporting other practical measures that aim to support pro-democratic forces. These would further increase the process of inter-cultural dialogue, not only in the Arab world, but also in Iran where direct action is highly dangerous. This could involve an increase in academic exchange programs, U.S.-supported libraries, funding of educative and art projects through NGOs, and the support and encouragement of contact between students in United States and the target population. These activities in the Middle East are of big strategic importance if we intend to reach out to foreign populations.

More generally, we need to distance ourselves from the impression that public diplomacy should come to rescue and deliver goodwill instantly among foreign publics without first establishing the necessary foundation of mutual trust and understanding. Instead, reflex should become habit. Public diplomacy is effective only when it builds on long-term relationships that identify common interests between people and capitalize on them.

Once again, thank you, Mr. Chairman and the rest of the Committee for inviting me to participate.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you both very much.

I have one question and, Mr. Kohut, this wasn't covered by your testimony, but there are many people who suggest that America is in this war with radical Islam because of our association with Israel. And, frankly, I reject that particular notion. I think that radical Muslims would hate our way of life—the Osama bin Ladens would hate us whether Israel existed or now.

However, is there a price we are paying with the average person in these other countries in terms of a positive approach or positive view of the United States as a cost of our association with Israel?

Mr. KOHUT. What we are doing is not looking at the attitudes of people who are over the top, who are extremists, but we are talking to ordinary people. And the point of view with respect to not only the Arabs, but people all around the Muslim world, is that the United States' policies are unfair. And that is an important perception to try to rectify and deal with if you are really going to improve attitudes toward the United States in this part of the world.

There is an agreed point of view on the part of many Muslims and Arab people with respect to the United States, a feeling that the U.S. doesn't care about people in this part of the world and that what we do widens the gap between rich people and poor people, and they are the poor people. And it is really a very complicated problem, but the one tangible thing that really stands out is Israel.

I remember talking to an expert who worked in Muslim Nigeria, and she was telling me that she would visit Nigeria years ago, the Muslims there, and never hear anything about Palestinians; but now Palestinians are heroes to the Muslims in that part of the world.

This is a real flash point. We even found, for example, that 30 percent of the Israelis that we questioned back in 2002 said they thought that the United States favored Israel too much. It is a complicated problem.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, as I say, I certainly believe that those who adhere to the radical philosophy, or the Islamo-Fascist philos-

ophy—like bin Laden—I don’t think that is part of that. Whatever we do with Israel is irrelevant to the fact that he hates all these other parts of us, but that only represents a very small portion.

Mr. KOHUT. Absolutely. Our poll, for example, shows that large percentages of people who think favorably of Osama bin Laden—given what they tell us about their aspirations for democracy and their other values—wouldn’t live very comfortably under the kind of regime that Osama bin Laden would have for them. But he represents someone who stuck his finger in the eye of the United States, and that is very appealing.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. In this war with radical Islam, we are going to have to deal with that perception in order to create the alliances that will defeat radical Islam.

Mr. KOHUT. We have to get some understanding of our policies.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Understanding of our policies or changing our policies?

Mr. KOHUT. That is not my—

Mr. BERMAN. I would never have asked you, except you said “understanding of our policies.”

Mr. KOHUT. Certainly the stated goals of our objectives, of our policies, are not taken as stated by the people that we interviewed. I am neutral on whether our policies should change or not.

Mr. BERMAN. I tremendously respect what you do generally and what you have done in this area, and I think it is very important for us to know about that, but the conundrum is, policies that make sense from an American and a national security point of view shouldn’t be abandoned simply because they are unpopular if they are the policies that appropriately serve American national interests. And at the same time, it is sometimes harder to effectively implement policies that are in our national interest if people around the world and in the areas where we have those policies are particularly angry about us.

So we have to take into consideration what you are saying even though we can’t let what you are saying necessarily drive the specific policies, which I guess, in a way, is sort of what you are saying.

Mr. KOHUT. Really, the consequences of that are two things. We sort of have to manage anti-Americanism because some of it is inevitable. On the other hand, in conducting our policies, one might say the rise of anti-Americanism is a problem in and of itself, and we have to take that into account in formulating policy.

Mr. BERMAN. Some of the things you are saying are not surprising. It is true, I think it is fair to say, that most Arab governments, even Arab governments that have come to terms with Israel in the context of their media, their controlled press, what their leaders say about Israel and United States policy toward Israel so permeates the atmosphere that it helps contribute to the findings that you come to; and some of that would come without regard to who is running Israel.

Your point about, in 2002, 30 percent of Israelis thought we were too pro-Israel. That was a particularly controversial time with very strong United States-domestic/Israeli opposition to some of

Sharon's policies, before Yasser Arafat had died, and what the 30 percent of the people in Israel were saying is, "We don't like the Israeli Government's policies, and therefore, since the U.S. Government looks like it is going along with those policies or not fighting those policies, not trying to change those policies, we think America's position is wrong"—a reflection of domestic politics translated into a perception of America.

My question, I have always been curious about how you feel the traditional methodology by which you get information from your polling and surveying techniques works in a country where people have reasons to be nervous about what they are saying. And you apparently have done polls.

Have you ever surveyed in Saudi Arabia?

Mr. KOHUT. No. I think in some places the climate of opinion is such that you can't really get opinions. In some of these places, for example, in Egypt, we have had a hard time getting people to do the surveys because they felt that they would get in a lot of trouble by doing them. I think that is changing in Egypt.

There may be opportunities to do surveys in Saudi Arabia, but we haven't taken that step.

I think you are right, but one of the things about these surveys is that the findings of them are really very stable, I mean, survey after survey, they begin to show you the same things. And if you look at some of the focus groups—the Council on Foreign Relations did some focus groups, I think in Jordan, in fact—when locals do in-depth interviews, they come away with a strong validation of what our quantitative surveys are.

Mr. BERMAN. You use nationals of the country being surveyed?

Mr. KOHUT. Absolutely.

Mr. BERMAN. You train them.

Mr. KOHUT. Absolutely, in all cases.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I request to be as quick as possible because we can catch our flights out of here. We are done with business.

Mr. SCHIFF. We are?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Do you have questions to ask?

Mr. SCHIFF. I guess I won that bet. I will be very quick, Mr. Chairman.

I just have two very quick questions. One is, you have seen the Nielsen reviews, I assume, of Alhurra's reach, and I just wanted to see what you think of the methodology that Nielsen used. Is there any reason not to believe what Nielsen found in terms of the reach?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Excellent question. Let's have him answer that.

Mr. KOHUT. I have to respectfully decline. I haven't looked carefully enough at what Nielsen did. I would really have to study what they did to offer a professional opinion.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. A second question?

Mr. SCHIFF. Yes. My second question is on a scale of 0 to 100 percent, how much of the image problem that we have can we correct in dealing with our outreach to the world, as opposed to changing policy?

Mr. KOHUT. I think what I was saying is, in the end, I think public diplomacy can affect things on the margins. I think we have to do the best we can, and it is certainly worth doing. But it is really

big changes in policies that will make a difference, not public diplomacy. Which isn't to say, we shouldn't do it; we should do it and should make every effort to get as much as we can out of that, make that effort, but make your expectations modest.

Mr. SCHIFF. Okay.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you.

I would like to thank our witnesses, the witnesses in the first panel as well. I would advise all witnesses that there are going to be questions submitted by members of the panel and staff, and we would ask that you would answer these questions, return them as soon as possible.

[The information referred to follows:]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS TO THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Question:

What is the best we can hope for with our Public Diplomacy in the Middle East or do you believe that we can actually soften the region's view of the US?

Response:

Public diplomacy is a long-term tool that requires uninterrupted and dedicated application in order to engage the public in specific regions and cement relationships with that public. Consistent, high-quality U.S.-sponsored broadcast communications can be a constant in the everyday lives of their audiences, and provide a readily available source of information on critical and controversial issues. If it doesn't "soften" the region's view of the U.S., they should at least provide a more accurate picture of the United States, its policies, as well as a more objective representation of events in their own countries.

BBG broadcasters provide accurate and objective information to foreign publics in an effort to provide them with the tools they need to evaluate the world around them and to give them a foundation for the development of democratic thought and ideals. We continue to believe that the more the citizens of other countries are exposed to American political, cultural, and economic policies and practices and the more they are exposed to objective local and international news, the more they will understand us, our common values, and the role of unbiased information in building democracy and potential bridges between us. We are optimistic that, with sustained outreach from the U.S. directly to foreign publics, progress can be continuous and increasing. This may not mean that listeners will like U.S. policies more in the short run. But it should mean that these policies, as well as the objectives and policies of foreign governments, will be better understood by our audiences and allow them to make more informed judgments and decisions.

As BBG Chairman Ken Tomlinson noted in his testimony, "President Bush said it best last month when he told the National Endowment for Democracy the militants are aided as well by elements of the Arab news media that incite hatred and anti-Semitism that feed conspiracy theories and speak of a so-called American war on Islam with seldom a word about what American actions have done to protect Muslims in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Iraq." Alhurra is a window of truth available to millions 24 hours a day that can chip away at these established beliefs.

Question:

What are the biggest issues facing the United States in the region? Are there countries and issues in which we stand a better chance of success in the face of these issues and why? How do we overcome these issues?

Response:

We would defer to the Department of State to frame the biggest issues facing the United States in the region. While U.S. international broadcasting serves U.S. strategic and foreign policy interests, it does not frame them or prioritize them. The BBG takes guidance from the State Department regarding the foreign policy objectives of the U.S. Our job, as specified in the U.S. International Broadcasting Act, is to provide our audiences with accurate and objective information, covering the top

stories here and abroad, as well as analysis of key issues of the day, and provide these audiences with the information they need to make informed decisions.

From the perspective of U.S. international broadcasting, there have been a number of challenges in the Middle East. The first was to get a seat at the table with respect to the satellite, AM and FM communications that reach so many people in this critically important region. That challenge has been at least partially accomplished, with the network of AM and FM radio transmitters established by the BBG in the region, with the assistance of the Department of State. The same is true of satellite communications. Alhurra now offers programming 24 hours a day on both Nilesat and Arabsat, reaching viewers across an area 5.7 million square miles in size.

The ongoing challenges are to maintain and improve Alhurra's programming, striving for the highest quality journalism; to enhance coverage of breaking events in this large and diverse geographic region; to cover events in real time so that our broadcasts are competitive with the established regional networks; and, in doing so, to continue to provide accurate, objective, credible reporting that brings audiences back to our networks to get the true story. We will continue to require strong technical and journalistic assets in the U.S. and abroad. Additionally, we will continue to need access to top Administration policy-makers who most credibly state the goals and objectives of U.S. policy on the air, but also counter the skewed reporting by other media. We have already set regional benchmarks for imaginative programming (such as town hall meetings and other forums for open debate), and we will need to continue to offer new and creative programming ideas. Our goal from the beginning has been to both draw audiences and engage them with wide-ranging discussions that include viewpoints from the United States and other regions of the world on such critical issues as human rights, democracy, and the war on terrorism.

Question:

What specific impact is MBN trying to have on its audiences in the Arab world?

Response:

Like all BBG broadcast entities, MBN looks to the tenets of the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 to frame its goals and objectives. We provide audiences with accurate and objective news and information, a projection of U.S. thought and institutions, and clear presentation of U.S. policies. We strive to inform our audiences about world and local events, allowing them to thoughtfully participate in their own societies.

The programs of both Radio Sawa and Alhurra Television project core values: freedom of speech, freedom to decide, freedom to learn. Alhurra's branding, town hall meeting formats, interactive programming, and open-forum debates are designed to help viewers open their eyes and minds, provide new perspectives, show them the world outside of the Middle East, and encourage them to think for themselves. Key programs, such as *Free Hour*, offer wide-ranging debate on significant issues; news programming offers fresh ways of evaluating the events of the day. Feature programming is designed to be sensitive to the needs of the audience and to be useful in their everyday lives. For example, health shows offer information about personal fitness and child health to families, while technology programs provide education about technological developments and opportunities throughout the world.

Cable network-style shows—and debates—are extremely important on Alhurra. Just as the Lincoln-Douglas debates in this country enabled people to recognize something was essentially wrong with a society that tolerated enslavement of men and women for economic development of a few, we need debates in the Islamic world on issues ranging from women's rights to economic opportunity to terrorism.

Question:

Specifically, enhancing "understanding" is mentioned in MBN's mission statement. What does enhancing understanding mean in terms of results?

Response:

"Enhancing understanding" is not just an MBN mission component, but rather one included in the overall BBG mission statement as well. It is a recent addition; the latter statement had previously only stressed the promotion of freedom and democracy. By adding this goal, the Board stresses the role of U.S. international broadcasting in communicating information about U.S. policy, principles, society, and culture, as mandated by Congress. Given that enhanced understanding is a new element, the BBG is now developing appropriate measures to gauge its fulfillment. These might include listener panels in which depth of audience understanding of key information or concepts is tracked over time. But again, this is a new area, and

thus no specific measure has yet been decided. It bears noting that establishing and implementing the measure would likely require considerable new financial outlays for research.

Question:

Our understanding is that enhancing understanding isn't the same thing as moving the needle, or influencing foreign public opinion.

Response:

Those are distinctions the BBG draws, yes. Consistent with its journalistic mission, the BBG does not overtly seek to influence in that we provide information through journalism rather than through direct government advocacy. Unlike other public diplomacy programs that explicitly seek to engage, inform, and influence—a well-worn public diplomacy formulation—U.S. international broadcasting has always sought deliberately to engage and inform. This is not to say BBG broadcasts lack influence. Although the meaning of “moving the needle” is debatable, usually within public diplomacy circles it is equated with achieving influence.

Yet we believe that our talk shows and debates advance the cause of freedom because we believe truth is on the side of freedom and the truth that emerges from our public affairs programs brings enlightenment to our viewers on subjects ranging from economics to international affairs.

Question:

Do you view influencing public opinion as part of MBN's mission? Does MBN intend to influence in other ways, such as the way other Middle Eastern broadcasters present their news?

Response:

Consistent with answers to the two preceding questions, we believe it is important that our broadcasts avoid the type of advocacy that audiences would see as propaganda. BBG broadcasts deliver programming that is journalistic. We expect that accurate news and information will influence foreign publics over time, just as we expect it to help the news and information landscape in the region to which we are broadcasting to become more balanced and objective.

Were directly influencing public opinion part of the BBG mission, program content would then include a host of advocacy programs. Audiences would immediately perceive the advocacy intent and see it as propaganda. This is especially true in regions such as the Middle East where populations are extremely anti-American and sensitive to even the slightest suggestion of pro-American bias. Credibility would then plummet or vanish entirely. And as a result, the journalistic mission would be irreparably damaged. Accordingly, MBN provides straightforward news and information and hopes that, by virtue of being an example of a free press in the American tradition, it earns audience respect and loyalty and therefore gains influence as a credible source. Notably, Congress has mandated that U.S. international broadcasting, in times of war and peace, closely adhere to the highest standards of professional journalism.

In our current affairs programming—talk shows and debates—listeners in the Arab world will be hearing points of view regarding topics like human rights and economic development not heard on other Arabic language stations.

Question:

Have you had any discussions with Undersecretary Karen Hughes regarding her early views on the role Radio Sawa and Alhurra can or should play in promoting U.S. public diplomacy objectives in the Muslim World? Do you, Mr. Chairman, agree with Undersecretary Hughes on the role that Alhurra and Radio Sawa can and should play in public diplomacy?

Response:

Under Secretary Hughes has participated in Board meetings and other deliberations since her confirmation, as have members of her staff. We are not aware of any significant differences of opinion regarding the role played by Alhurra, Radio Sawa, or any other BBG broadcast entities.

Question:

How does the Board ensure that MBN is accomplishing its mission? How does the Board measure MBN's success?

Response:

The Board provides guidance and oversight to MBN in the same manner as it does for other broadcast entities of the BBG. This guidance and oversight are ad-

ministered in a number of ways. First, there are formal budget and strategic planning mechanisms established by the Board to ensure that MBN, VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and OCB are mission-oriented. The language service review process brings together an analysis of each language service's personnel and transmission assets, listening rates, local media environment, and makes strategic recommendations regarding the service in the context of the foreign policy priorities of the United States. Fiscal reporting through the BBG's Chief Financial Officer ensures that entities are utilizing funding in accordance with appropriations mandates. Program reviews that evaluate the content and delivery of programming are implemented to ensure that the programming lives up to journalistic standards and contains high-quality production values.

As Chairman Tomlinson stated on the hearing record, "we have a long, long record of statistical excellence in the research the Broadcasting Board of Governors and our predecessors have commissioned over the years." Research reports are provided to the Board for its review; each language service is surveyed on an annual basis. The results of these research reports, in-depth interviews and focus groups provide information regarding whether the program content and format resonates with the audience, and whether the program is achieving traction in its media market. In addition, the Board receives reports on at least a monthly basis from the heads of each entity on the challenges and successes experienced by each of the broadcasters. The Board measures success by reviewing all of these indicators.

Question:

The U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 calls for U.S. international broadcasting efforts to clearly and effectively present the policies of the United States and include responsible discussion and opinion on these policies. How does the BBG ensure that MBN is effectively presenting U.S. foreign policy, and how does it avoid the appearance of promoting U.S. policy?

Response:

BBG entities use standard journalism (including coverage of the news and issues of the day) to present the policies of the U.S. While some may see our coverage of the United States as "advocacy," it is in fact coverage that seeks to be comprehensive and objective. If BBG entities are to be seen as credible, if we want our audiences to turn to us for the news, if we want to set the standard for journalistic behavior in the regions to which we broadcast, we cannot be seen primarily as advocates—but as journalists.

Edward R. Murrow once said, "To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful . . . Our story sells itself if it is told powerfully, accurately and with credibility." The persuasion and power of our story is in telling it from an objective perspective, in contrast to the subjective terms often utilized by indigenous news outlets in the Middle East.

MISSION AND PERFORMANCE

Question:

How do you counter the idea so prevalent that Al-Hurra is the official voice of the United States Government and is therefore not taken seriously throughout the Middle East?

Response:

The answer to this question lies in the standards described in the previous question. In our substantial activities in the Middle East—both with members of our audience and program guests—we have not found the sentiment that Alhurra is the "official voice" of United States Government or that Alhurra is "not taken seriously" throughout the Middle East. There are certainly opponents of U.S. foreign policy who wish to see Alhurra fail and attack its credibility. But independent research by ACNielsen has continually shown that Alhurra's audience considers its news to be credible and does not devalue that news because the station is funded by the U.S. Government. In the latest ACNielsen survey of nine Middle Eastern countries, 77 percent of Alhurra viewers stated that the news is reliable. This indicates that viewers take the programming very seriously.

Question:

Why if Al-Hurra is considered an extension of the U.S., is Al-Jazeera not considered an extension of Qatar from where it is funded?

Response:

We do not have evidence that Alhurra's viewers regard it as an "extension of the US." It does appear to be the case that Al Jazeera, though funded by Qatar, is not considered to be part of Qatar's public diplomacy. Nevertheless our research indicates most viewers consider that Al Jazeera is not objective in its reporting of events in Qatar.

Question:

How much of Al-Hurra's perception problem do you see coming from the hatred of US foreign policy in the Middle East?

Response:

We would expect that a dislike of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East could color the opinion of many of Alhurra's potential viewers in the Middle East. This can only be overcome over time, as more and more viewers test the station's credibility and realize that it is not broadcasting propaganda. Our research indicates that people who watch Alhurra already consider it a credible source of news.

Question:

Why is it that Israeli radio which reports to have as much as an 80% listenership in the Arab world, is listened to mainly for its news, yet the same cannot be said for Al-Hurra? How do you explain this discrepancy?

Response:

We are not familiar with any survey indicating that level of listenership for Israeli radio in the Middle East and cannot comment on it.

Question:

Why does Al-Hurra refuse to interview American officials for its broadcasts?

Response:

We're rather astonished that this question would even be asked. Of course, we interview American officials. Frequently. Alhurra does not refuse to interview American officials for its broadcasts. In fact, Alhurra interviews American officials (as available) on a regular basis. Among those who have been interviewed on Alhurra are President George W. Bush, as well as many members of Congress, and officials from the State Department and Department of Defense. It is sometimes the case that Alhurra will seek comment from a U.S. government official, but is unable to obtain access in a timely manner.

Question:

Why does Al-Hurra pay its reporters through APTN (Associated Press TV)?

Response:

Alhurra attains efficiency and cost savings by coordinating reporters through APTN, America's foremost news service. Through this relationship, Alhurra has been able to have a substantial presence in the Middle East without having a substantial staff and/or physical presence in the Middle East, which simply is not possible for both budgetary and security reasons. In addition to identifying local correspondents, APTN arranges for crews, editing facilities and satellite transmissions throughout the region—allowing MBN to compete with much larger and better funded organizations (such as Al Jazeera and CNN) in getting news on the air as it happens throughout the Middle East. In all cases, editorial control remains with Alhurra.

Question:

We have been told that in the case of film being shot by APTN camera crews on stories for Al-Hurra, APTN has a right to use that film, perhaps even to resell it. We are told this amount is close to \$1,500 for a three minute report. Does this not amount to us providing APTN with a direct subsidy?

Response:

Neither Alhurra nor any of the scores of other international news organizations that use APTN provide a "direct subsidy" to APTN. APTN's charges are in fact very reasonable and consistent with standard industry practice. For example, in addition to providing a correspondent, broadcast crew, editing facility and satellite transmission, APTN's fee also includes both liability insurance for the correspondent and legal and business services for the station (so that, for example, all work is done in conformance with each country's local labor laws). Moreover, if a specific report is commissioned for Alhurra, it is only used on Alhurra unless Alhurra has given

express consent for APTN to make it available to other media outlets for a price or otherwise. (This practice is not unique to Alhurra. The vast majority of broadcast organizations throughout the world share their footage, so long as it is properly credited.)

Question:

Do you have a style manual that is used for Al-Hurra? What words do you routinely use to describe terrorist attacks, terrorists, etc.?

Response:

In May 2004, MBN developed an Arabic-language style manual for the network. It was written by a noted journalism and Arabic-language professor Dr. Mouin Rahal (who is currently an Alhurra employee) and at the time it was written it was the only Arabic-language style manual in existence. During the past 18 months, Dr. Rahal has updated the manual and has sent email updates to its users at Alhurra. Alhurra uses terminology that best describes violent incidents in a straight-forward manner. Thus, as appropriate, Alhurra might identify an individual as a suicide-bomber or terrorist, and would identify an event (where appropriate) as a terrorist attack. This type of choice is appropriately much more a matter of professional news judgment than "style."

Question:

Many employees at MBN speak Arabic, including the VP for News and Public Affairs Mouafac Harb. What Arabic language resources (e.g. staff, translations) does the BBG Board have to provide effective oversight?

Response:

Mouafac Harb is fluent in both Arabic and English, as is appropriate for MBN's news director. Most of MBN's other senior news officials also speak both languages, and are fully trained and experienced in implementing journalistic standards in broadcasting. They provide day-to-day editorial control.

In this manner, MBN is no different from other BBG services. For the most part, BBG language services control the content of their broadcasts in vernacular languages. In the case of the Voice of America, some of the content is adapted and translated from material provided by VOA's Central Newsroom, which derives its materials largely from English language commercial newswire reports. Of course, all of our services have access to, and routinely uses commercial wire services.

To further ensure that the editorial content of the material is consistently reliable and journalistic, BBG entities perform program reviews which look at issues of content and program delivery.

Question:

Why were no bureaus set up for Al-Hurra? Why do the reporters not have access to the wire reports to better aid their reporting?

Response:

Alhurra has, in fact, set up three news bureaus in the Middle East—in Amman, Dubai and Baghdad. We also coordinate operations in Beirut through a local entity. Establishment of additional bureaus would require both long-term commitments and additional funding not currently in the Alhurra budget. As Mr. Harb testified on November 10 before this Committee: "I would love, as a news director, to have a bureau in every single Arab city so we can beat the competition in our news, but that has a dollar figure, and I'm sure you don't want me to go in that direction." Most of Alhurra's reporters have access to wire services, including AP, Agence France Presse and Reuters and wire services are provided to other reporters when the need arises.

Obviously, budget limitations restrict the number of bureaus we can maintain.

Question:

Some critics in the Middle East suggest that Al-Hurra does not cover the daily events of their lives and instead relies more on studio shots and studio work. Critics say that Al-Hurra has to "go into the street," to be better received. How would you answer this criticism?

Response:

Alhurra has correspondents in 23 countries who regularly report from the field on issues affecting the daily lives of persons throughout the Middle East. The only "studio shots and studio work" broadcast on Alhurra are in its discussion programs—which, like *Meet the Press* or *Face the Nation*, are produced from studios

with guests. Alhurra's ability to do more "on the street" reports is limited by its budget which is less than half that of either Al Jazeera or Al-Arabiya.

Question:

Do you believe that it can ever compete with Al-Jazeera and the other networks for the hearts and minds of the Middle East?

Response:

Alhurra has already started making an impact on Middle Eastern viewers—including those who regularly watch Al Jazeera, an impressive 40 percent of whom report that they also watch Alhurra. Gaining trust and respect throughout the Middle East will not happen overnight. Yet Alhurra already is becoming an important source of news and information in the Middle East: Just 21 months after its launch, it was reaching more than 20 million adult viewers a week.

AUDIENCE SHARE

Question:

We understand from Mr. Tomlinson's written testimony that according to ACNielsen, satellite viewer rates were in double-digit percentages. This sounds good, but I would like to ask how are the questions posed to those surveyed? Are those interviewed being asked whether they rely on Al-Hurra for their news or if they have seen Al-Hurra during the period asked about? This difference is very important.

Response:

The relevant section of our questionnaire begins by asking respondents what TV stations they have heard of. For each TV station of which the respondent is aware, the interviewer then asks whether they have watched that station in the past 12 months and, if so, when they last watched the station. The responses yield the basic "past week" figure that is our primary metric for measuring audience size. The "past week" figure has long been the basic audience measurement for all BBG broadcasters, as well as all the other major international broadcasting services such as BBC, Radio France International, Deutsche Welle, Radio Canada International, Radio Netherlands, and others.

Question:

What has the Board done to gain assurances about the reliability of the audience research performed for MBN, consistent with the broadcasting principles of the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994?

Response:

Audience research for MBN is conducted under the International Audience Research Program (IARP) by InterMedia, the independent, non-profit organization selected by competitive procurement to perform audience research for all BBG broadcasters. Research for MBN is carried out under the same rigorous standards and oversight as that for all other BBG broadcast services. In the case of the MBN studies, InterMedia has sub-contracted with ACNielsen—one of the world's most reputable market research companies—and other leading research firms to conduct the actual fieldwork, with close oversight from InterMedia staff. BBG's own staff carefully reviews all data and reports submitted by InterMedia as well to ensure maintenance of the highest technical standards. In short, the field research is conducted by one of the world's most respected research companies and there are multiple levels of oversight by experienced professionals on every project. We have every confidence that the research conducted on behalf of MBN is accurate and reliable.

Question:

How do you reconcile the differences in your results for MBN, versus those that are reported by other polls or surveys, such as studies done by the State Department Office of Research or Zogby International?

Response:

We are not certain to which specific surveys the question refers. However, most public comments on the apparent disparities between BBG figures and other research have cited the surveys done by Zogby International in association with Shibley Telhami. Those surveys asked respondents to identify their top two news sources, while BBG surveys attempt to establish the percentage of respondents who have watched each channel in the previous week. As these two lines of questioning measure entirely different phenomena, it is not surprising that they yield different results. While asking respondents about their top news sources is entirely legitimate, it does not yield a measure of audience size, and the results of such inquiries

cannot be used to make any inferences about the size of Alhurra's audience. In fact, while we have not had an opportunity to examine the raw data from the most recent survey conducted by Zogby and Telhami, those findings that have been released publicly suggest audience sizes for Alhurra considerably greater than we have found in our own research.

Question:

When we see and hear large numbers of audience viewership we cannot help comparing these numbers with what we hear out in the region. In the Palestinian Authority, we have been told that Al-Hurra is not even in third or fourth place, but six or even seventh place. How can you account for these discrepancies?

Response:

There is no discrepancy at all here, and it would not surprise us at all if Alhurra were in seventh place among viewers in the Palestine Authority. In fact, in a region with, by some accounts, more than one hundred satellite channels, to be number seven after a year and a half on the air would be no mean feat. Given the number of channels and amount of satellite viewing that takes place in the Middle East, it is entirely possible to have a large audience and still be ranked below many other stations. In short, we see no contradiction between the numbers BBG has reported and the comments you have heard.

Question:

Would it be possible for you to provide us with the entire list of questions for all of your surveys and your methodology in conducting them?

Response:

The BBG would be happy to brief Committee staff in detail on all methodological questions of interest.

Question:

Would you be willing to allow an independent board of experts or even the Department of States Office of Research to conduct a review to determine your viewership?

Response:

The question implies that the BBG's current research or survey techniques are not "independent" or professional. The BBG contracts with an independent research firm, InterMedia, to conduct our research. InterMedia, in turn, sometimes contracts with other independent, commercial survey providers to gain information about viewership or listenership. The Middle East Broadcasting Networks have been surveyed by ACNielsen, IPSOS-stat, Oxford Research, and other independent groups. Additional layers of review are not necessary.

In addition, the GAO is currently looking into MBN's research program and its staff has already met with a number of key BBG officials. We would also note that the State Department's OIG conducted a thorough audit last year that, among other things, included an extensive review of the methodology used by the BBG in conducting audience research on behalf of the BBG's Middle East broadcasting operations. The OIG's report did not identify any significant flaws in the research program. In addition, we have offered to meet with the Department of State's Office of Research to discuss our research program in detail.

Again, we would like to stress that the methodology used to determine the viewership for Alhurra Television is similar to that utilized by other international broadcasters, and is the same methodology that has been used for years to demonstrate listenership to RFE/RL, Radio Free Asia, and Voice of America. Our research methods have not been reformulated in any way to provide a more favorable picture of Alhurra's audience share.

PROCUREMENT

Question:

What was the reasoning behind placing the corporate and legal presence of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks or MBN in Beirut and not, for example Dubai, where a large number of news organizations have their offices in Dubai's Media City? According to Dubai's Media City website, Media City houses: the Associated Press, Bertelsmann, CNN, CNBC, International Advertising Association (IAA), McGrawhill Platts, Sony and Reuters, Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), Saudi Research and Publishing (SRPC) and Taj TV.

Response:

MBN does not have a corporate or legal presence in Lebanon. It does have a legal presence and 10,000 square foot program center in Dubai at Dubai Media City. As Mr. Kleinman testified at the November 10 hearing before this Committee: "When we looked into the problems of setting up a business entity, setting up studios, setting up an accounting department, whatever in Lebanon—and at this particular time when we were starting, the Syrians were still a major factor in Lebanon—it did not become something that was really practical for us." Thus, MBN did not establish and does not have plans to establish a corporate and legal presence in Beirut. Instead, MBN contracts with a well-established local company to provide space, equipment, logistics and support for Alhurra's production operations in Beirut.

Question:

One would think that Beirut, at the time of the network's creation February 2004, was under Syrian occupation, and would not necessarily be considered the most optimal location for an American Government-funded television network. Did anyone ever advocate setting up the network anywhere other than in Beirut or did you choose to locate it there because of your knowledge of the country? What made Beirut more important for the network's location than anywhere else?

Response:

MBN did not set up a network in Beirut, and has not since set up a network or legal presence in Beirut. MBN does have physical bureaus in Amman, Dubai Media City and Baghdad. MBN currently does some TV production in Beirut which is a major TV production center in the Middle East. Programs produced in Beirut represent less than 10 percent of Alhurra's program schedule.

Question:

With the network set up in Beirut, did that location force you to look more towards a Lebanese orientation for procurement for the stations' various services? Was this by design?

Response:

Again, the networks' overseas center is not in Beirut. MBN does some TV production in Beirut which is a major production center in the Middle East. MBN does not have a Lebanese orientation for procurement. MBN follows all applicable rules and regulations in procurement. In contracting for services in Lebanon, most of the bidders are naturally Lebanese companies.

Question:

Mr. Harb, do you know Eli Khoury of Saatchi & Saatchi in Beirut? If so how?

Response:

Mr. Harb's relationship with Mr. Khoury was and is professional, not personal. They have not in the past, nor in the present, had a business relationship other than through Mr. Khoury's work with MBN.

Question:

Are you aware that he is associated with two companies named Quantum Communications and Brand Central, both of whom have been awarded no-bid contracts with the Middle East Broadcasting Networks?

Response:

Yes, we are aware that Mr. Khoury is associated with these companies. Please see question 7, below, for a clarification that MBN's contract with Quantum was not a "no-bid" contract.

Question:

Why was so much trust placed in Saatchi and Saatchi?

Response:

Saatchi & Saatchi has a global reputation as one of the best advertising and strategic communications firms in the world, and has been used by the United States Government (including the State Department) for various projects. These facts and history generated MBN's trust and confidence in Saatchi & Saatchi from the beginning and played key roles in Saatchi & Saatchi's selection as a branding and promotion provider. Clients of Saatchi and Saatchi include Western Union, Cadbury, Procter & Gamble, Hi Magazine, Future Television and the King Hussein Cancer Center to name just a few.

Question:

Why did these contracts have to be no-bid contracts? Were there no qualified companies across the entire Middle East that could have supplied the broadcasting services Al-Hurra needed?

Response:

The contract awarded to Quantum Communications for production support services (including office space) was not a “no-bid contract,” as Mr. Kleinman explained at the hearing on November 10, 2005. Rather, as he testified, MBN spoke “to three companies” about providing these services, “two of whom refused to put in bids once they found out what our security and other requirements were. And then subsequent to that, we negotiated and had a sole-source justification under the appropriate rules and regulations” and awarded the contract to Quantum. (This contract is being re-bid in 2006.) BrandCentral received a contract in March 2005 for various services, including the design and ongoing updates to MBN’s Alhurra TV and Alhurra-Iraq websites. Among the numerous reasons for the award of this contract to BrandCentral (which was done with the approval of MBN’s Board of Directors and in accordance with OMB Circular A–110) was that the company provided a unique combination of corporate experience, had the capability to interact sensitively within the target culture on crucial communications issues, maintained key personnel capabilities, possessed technological expertise, was located within the hub of the Middle East advertising world, possessed the necessary security capabilities and could deliver the services requested by MBN at a reasonable price.

In addition, the Inspector General of the Department of State and Broadcasting Board of Governors is conducting a review of MBN’s procurement and contract procedures at the BBG’s request.

Question:

We understand that IBB (International Broadcasting Board) attorneys drafted a policy that among other things warned against conflicts of interest and non-competitive practices. This policy read, “For all other procurements MTN shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may hinder competition.” Had you ever seen such a policy? Was this the policy that was adopted at Al-Hurra? If not, why?

Response:

MBN is aware of the policy of the International Broadcasting Bureau to which the question refers and adheres both to that policy and to its own conflicts of interest policies.

HIRING PRACTICES

Question:

Some critics in the Middle East suggest that Al-Hurra must have more Palestinians working for the network. I am sure that to whatever Middle Eastern country you travel, they too would say the same thing about their people as well. Can you explain then why Al-Hurra has placed such an undue emphasis on Lebanese—Arabic speakers for work at the station?

Response:

MBN has not sought to place an “undue emphasis on Lebanese-Arabic speakers for work at the station.” As Mr. Harb testified on November 10: “At the beginning when we launched the channel . . . we had only six months to find—and I use the word to recruit—talents. It was not an easy task to do. That was one of the main challenges—that we didn’t have all the time. And as you know, after September 11th, it became so difficult to recruit people from the Middle East. It takes time to clear them, to get them visas, to come to the U.S. and to settle. And to train them on advanced technology that Alhurra has deployed. We seized on an opportunity early on. There was a television channel in Lebanon that was shut down by the Syrian occupation. And we found there was a nice team there—let’s take them immediately. There were . . . five or six. So the early batch of the people who joined Alhurra came from Lebanon and created that perception [that there was an “undue emphasis” on Lebanese journalists at Alhurra]. However . . . it’s a misperception . . . [T]oday, we have talents and producers and writers that come from all over the Middle East and the Arab world.” Alhurra employs anchors, producers and writers that hail from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine among other countries. Additionally, please consider that the press in many of the countries to which we broadcast is censored and/or government-controlled and this

limits the number of professional journalists experienced in the standards required by MBN.

Question:

Did you maintain a written list of qualifications for broadcasters at the network? If so, what were the qualifications maintained for their ability to speak and understand English, important for operating in the network studios?

Response:

MBN's broadcasters fall into many different categories including producers, editors, writers, librarians and on-air anchors. MBN maintains detailed job descriptions for each position, descriptions which are similar to those used by other major radio and TV news organizations. The skills required include such things as researching, writing, editing text and editing video. All broadcasters are selected for hire on the basis of their education, training, experience, and dedication to our mission. In addition MBN evaluates candidates on the basis of face-to-face interviews, recordings of prior work and auditions. The qualifications, dedication and professionalism of MBN's broadcasters are second to none in the Arab media world. While the vast majority of MBN's broadcasters have proficiency in English, their proficiency in English is not as important as their ability to edit, report and write news in Arabic, which is the language in which MBN broadcasts.

Question:

Mr. Harb, this committee has received a list of more than 134 people brought into this country on US Visas to work on either of the two networks, Sawa (radio) or Al-Hurra. We have also heard complaints that if those brought in on visas raised questions or did not cooperate, they were threatened with having their visas pulled. Is this true?

Response:

We are not aware of any such threats, nor have we received any complaints that such threats have been made. If they were made, it would be completely contrary to MBN's policy, which requires all employees of MBN to treat each other with fairness and respect. Additionally, MBN has neither the authority nor the legal ability to issue or revoke visas.

Question:

Regardless of this, why were so many people brought from overseas to take language positions at the network when there were many in this and surrounding areas who could do the same job?

Response:

Alhurra hires from both the Middle East and the United States. However, the number of highly-skilled, experienced Arabic-speaking TV journalists working in the U.S. is extremely small. Moreover, because of its mission—and its desire to be taken seriously as a news channel—it was important for MBN to have Arab broadcasters who have a sound knowledge of the countries to which MBN broadcasts, and are knowledgeable of new idiomatic changes in the language. The station was designed to sound like a local Arab station, but have the feel, professionalism and look of an American network. As with all BBG broadcasters, MBN interviews and considers all candidates including U.S. citizens with the appropriate experience. However, it is sometimes the case that the broadcast entity will hire a non-citizen whom we believe may better connect with our audience.

Question:

If you believe that those broadcasters from overseas took precedence over local foreign language broadcasters, how did those that you brought to the United States qualify better?

Response:

All journalists hired by MBN (whether as writers, producers, or on-air talents) were hired solely on the basis of their experience, skill and professional qualification for the jobs they now perform. This may be a somewhat subjective process, but MBN evaluated each candidate's abilities and experience, and selected the candidate most suitable for each position.

Question:

What were the qualifications for commentators at the network? Was there any written job qualification guidelines?

Response:

MBN invites a broad range of guests (from throughout the United States and around the world) to offer analysis and commentary on MBN's many discussion programs. Some of the commentators and analysts appear regularly on MBN and have a contractual (though not employment) relationship with MBN. Most of the guests, however, are invited to appear as warranted by the topic to be discussed. Guest commentators are selected on the basis of their expertise in the topic to be discussed. Most are well known and respected for their expertise. In Alhurra's startup phase, respected and well-known commentators were difficult to attract. This difficulty has been largely overcome.

Question:

Mr. Harb, this Committee has heard from several people that testified to the network's record on dealing with women at the station and when you hear some of these stories, one must ask himself, what is your network's policy on sexual discrimination? Did you follow the standards applied under US law?

Response:

By company policy, all employees and contractors at MBN are treated with respect and in a professional manner. MBN fully complies with all applicable federal, state and local employment laws and regulations—including those regarding all forms of discrimination. Additionally, employees are (a) required to attend a course on discrimination and professionalism, which is taught by an experienced attorney, and (b) required to read, review and sign a statement that they have received MBN's written policies regarding discrimination and professionalism. All persons who believe that they are being harassed or otherwise discriminated against are encouraged to report such incidents either to the Director of Human Resources or to the General Counsel—or both. (At MBN, both of these positions are held by women.) No such reports have been received by either the Director of Human Resources or the General Counsel.

Question:

Why did you not agree to the need for cultural awareness programs as advocated by several former employees of Al-Hurra?

Response:

By company policy, all employees at MBN are treated fairly and equitably—regardless of their gender, race, national origin, religion or “culture.” We have not believed that cultural awareness programs were necessary given this environment. However, we would not rule out such training in the future.

RADIO FREE ASIA

Question:

What were the criteria used in hiring the new president for Radio Free Asia? What was the final vote of the board approving the appointment. Can you provide us any of the criteria you plan to use in replacing the President of Radio Free Europe /Radio Liberty?

Response:

The founders of RFA created a broadcast organization with impeccable journalistic credentials to promote freedom and democracy in Asia. While RFA's journalism was extraordinary, the organization had recently weathered some difficult times with respect to personnel and other administrative practices. In seeking a new president, the Board looked for a candidate with strong management skills as well as the ability to lead and direct an international journalistic organization.

The Radio Free Asia Board initiated a search process to reach out to potential applicants. Notices in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and CEO Job Opportunities Update, stressed that the successful candidate must, among other qualifications, “have proven success in effectively leading and managing people in complex and diverse organizations” and “be able to lead strategy development to ensure that RFA meets its mission and goals and that all employees achieve maximum potential in a fair and equitable manner.”

Although the search process produced a number of well-qualified applicants, the Board also considered promoting from within. Libby Liu, RFA's then Vice President for Administration and Finance, had played a strong role in guiding the broadcast organization through its recent administrative challenges, and exhibited a strong commitment to the organization's mission. Ms. Liu was hired after RFA employees had certified union status. Through her efforts, RFA successfully negotiated a union

agreement to protect management interests, and reestablished strong communication and trust between RFA management and staff. She brought greater cohesion to the organization, increased its efficiency, and demonstrated a deep commitment to RFA's mission during the two-plus years she served RFA in a leadership position. Her work experience, together with a distinguished educational background (degrees in business (MBA) and law (J.D.)) offered skills well-suited to RFA's current requirements.

Replacing Tom Dine as President of RFE/RL will be a challenge indeed. To aid the process of finding a new President, the BBG has contracted with the firm of Heidrick & Struggles. We have identified the following criteria, among others, to define the experience and qualifications the applicant should possess: Experience leading a significant multi-million dollar company; Experience working with the federal budget process; Knowledge of international broadcasting and familiarity with radio and other broadcasting technologies; Experience in the government and nonprofit environment; Demonstrated strong managerial skills that facilitate a participatory management structure; Demonstrated skill in public speaking; Experience in managing large staffs in a decentralized environment with multiple locations worldwide; Demonstrate strong leadership characteristics and a visionary approach to management, able to move the organization forward in an increasingly competitive multimedia marketplace; Strong communication skills; and Ability to develop unique approaches to challenging problems.

Of course, finding a candidate with all of these skills may not be possible. But with the assistance of Heidrick & Struggles, we are confident that we will find excellent candidates interested in leading RFE/RL forward in a fascinating, challenging and evolving environment.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And with that, this hearing is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. MARK RHODES, PRESIDENT, INTERMEDIA

InterMedia is a leading independent non-profit provider of global research, evaluation and consulting, equipping international media, government and non-governmental organizations to understand their audiences, target their communications, shape their messages and measure their effectiveness. We focus on transitional and developing countries worldwide, including the most difficult areas that commercial for-profits do not work in, as the lack of media and advertising revenue make these areas unprofitable for them. It is often the case that the most interesting areas for international broadcasting are those areas of least interest to commercial research organizations. InterMedia attempts to fill this gap for its clients.

InterMedia is unique as an organization in that it has been almost singularly devoted to carrying out audience research for U.S. international broadcasters throughout its history. InterMedia is the direct successor to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's media, audience and opinion research units, which were first established in Munich, Germany, in 1954. For more than three and a half decades these units distinguished themselves with the innovation, depth, area expertise and professionalism they applied to research on media behavior in the Soviet bloc countries. InterMedia was among the first to conduct and support the development of independent, in-country public opinion and media-use surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. These research findings—which were communicated through regular reports, presentations and meetings, and preserved in data and report archives—were key to RFE/RL's understanding of the nature of its audience and the effectiveness of its programming.

Building on this base of knowledge and experience, InterMedia continued this signature approach to research, using international media and area experts to design, manage and interpret audience research studies when it was established in 1996 with the backing of the BBG, VOA, RFA and RFE/RL as an independent nonprofit corporation in Washington, D.C. InterMedia has, since 1996, widely expanded its geographic coverage, adding considerable expertise and skill in new areas of media and market research.

InterMedia's quantitative studies comply fully with CIBAR, WAPOR and ESOMAR research guidelines based on current scientific, quality control and ethical standards. Standard wording for measurement questions are used across all surveys, including the Radio Sawa and Al Hurra studies, to ensure compatibility with our own past data and with the current data of other CIBAR members such as BBC, Deutsche Welle and Radio France, with whom we exchange data. Samples are large enough (generally 2,000) in order to capture media behavior among different population groups.

Under contract to the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, InterMedia now serves as the primary provider of media and audience research to the U.S. international broadcasting community, providing them with measures of effectiveness, feedback on program quality, and recommendations for broadcasting strategy worldwide. Our research extends to all BBG broadcast entities: VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and now the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (Alhurra and Sawa). Because of the breadth of our work, our survey data is the standard currency used by some three dozen international broadcasters including BBC, Deutsche Welle, Radio Canada International, Radio France International, NHK Japan, Voice of Russia, Radio Australia and others. By virtue of our history and expertise on international audience research, InterMedia has long standing relationships with all the major international radio broadcasters, largely through the Conference of International Broadcasters' Audience Research Services (CIBAR). To ensure that our measurements re-

flect best practices and harmonization with the work of the other international broadcasters, a requirement of the BBG contract, we coordinate with the research departments of these organizations, many of whom we are in regular contact with. InterMedia has always shared or sold survey data to these other international broadcasters, as well as helped to provide useful contact information or interpretation of existing data when asked.

We are currently active year-round in some 60 countries (120 over the past 15 years) and are recognized for the global breadth and depth of our research coverage. InterMedia is flexible, offering its clients research tools designed to address a wide and evolving range of media and public attitude issues. As an example, InterMedia has for the past several years been exploring the use of new and emerging technologies (Internet, cell phones, SMS, iPods) among developing populations and has worked with the BBC to develop a new ethnographic approach to the subject which it is testing this month in Pakistan. Since 2001, InterMedia has completed well over 1,000 media research projects on behalf of the BBG and U.S. international broadcasters. During this time it has completed hundreds of other media and communications projects for clients as diverse as the State Department, for which we provide an evaluation of their Muslim student exchange program, UNICEF and Sesame Street Productions.

A particular advantage that InterMedia brings to its clients is the absence of an exclusivity agreement with any particular marketing firm. In the countries we work in, we usually have contacts with several firms and are able to pick the best for the particular needs and budget of the client. Through this approach, InterMedia has contracted with some 250 different research firms. InterMedia's ethos has been to develop capacity and know-how among local partners and to develop strong relationships. InterMedia's approach centers on close and constant communications and liaison coupled with on-the-ground technical supervision and management for its projects to insure quality. This approach has resulted in the development of a higher level of capacity and expertise among the local entities. This is a continually evolving and improving process. Such relationships now span many projects over a period of many years and evolved a level of honesty of exchange of trust that is difficult to gain and is very valuable to the clients.

As part of our contract with the BBG, during the course of a single year, our research list would include approximately 50 projects in support of Radio Sawa and Al Hurra across some dozen countries. These projects would include national surveys, focus groups, marketing analysis support and service reviews. The bulk of the survey work is carried out by ACNielsen across the region to provide uniformity of data quality and methodological approach. These surveys entail the same rigorous application of scientific methods as all other quantitative studies done by InterMedia. The standard methodological approach to the surveys includes Intermedia field oversight by its staff, random sampling, use of randomizers such as the Kish grid and thorough verification using call-backs. We have so far managed more than 25 surveys the Arab world, working in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Bahrain and Kuwait. We hope to add Algeria, Libya and Yemen to the list shortly as well as the Palestinian territories if Sawa/Al Hurra is able to arrange rebroadcasting there. In the past some survey data for Al Hurra has been also been purchased from the French company IPSOS to provide an interim, "quick read" of the broadcast situation.

In addition to the surveys, InterMedia works with Sawa and Al Hurra to provide qualitative feedback on its programming. In particular, we have done in-depth interviews and focus groups for both broadcasters in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia with the aims of ascertaining local media needs and consumption patterns, exploring reactions to specific programs and eliciting consumers' recommendations. We have also conducted monitoring panels for Radio Sawa in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Morocco. This research engaged ten panelists in each country to listen to and evaluate six hours of Radio Sawa programming as assigned by InterMedia without the broadcaster's knowledge. The evaluation took the form of an extensive self-completion questionnaire. The panelists were asked to rate Radio Sawa on more than 30 criteria related to programming content and presentation style; they then answered a series of open-ended question about their perceptions of the broadcaster's impartiality, mission, sensitivity towards Arab and American culture as well as its target audience. The results of the panels in these four countries were among the inputs in to the first-ever program review of Radio Sawa held in December 2004.

Staffing

As suggested by our history and work, InterMedia has unmatched depth and breadth of audience research experience tailored to the needs of international broadcasters with more than 200 years of accumulated audience research experience

among our staff, plus a 45-year organizational history of carrying out research, and intimate knowledge and understanding of the U.S. international broadcasters' audience research needs.

InterMedia's staff is organized into Regional Project Teams that carry out multiple research, evaluation and consulting projects for various clients. The company's strengths include its people—area experts skilled in scientifically-based research and focused on client solutions—its vast global network of local research partners and contacts and its rich data archive of some 600 media and opinion surveys carried out over the past 15 years. Working with the BBG services, questionnaires and variables have been standardized to allow for quick trending and cross-cultural analyses for the clients.

InterMedia now has 36 full-time staff in Washington as well as a network of highly professional and committed consultants and freelancers who support us with a range of research and technical functions. Our “signature” staff member is someone with an advanced degree and a combination of area expertise—knowledge of the local languages, (we speak some 20 languages in the DC office), culture, history, politics and media environment, along with the requisite technical skills—strong oral and written communication skills, analytical abilities and methodological understanding, statistical abilities and solid project management skills.

Since InterMedia was established in 1996, we have worked hard to codify our unique knowledge of media research and consulting in transitional and developing societies, to establish clear quality control procedures and to set standards for workmanship. In 2001, when InterMedia was awarded the BBG contract (the IARP—International Audience Research Program), the BBG turned to InterMedia to establish the workflows and procedures for carrying out the hundreds of research projects involved in the global contract.

